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May 18 - 1898
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EFFIE AND I;

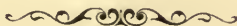
OR,

SEVEN YEARS IN A COTTON MILL.

A STORY OF THE SPINDLE CITY.

BY

MRS. CHARLOTTE S. HILBOURNE.



CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED BY ALLEN AND FARNHAM.

1863.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by
MRS. CHARLOTTE S. HILBOURNE,
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THIS
LITTLE VOLUME
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
TO THE
OWNERS AND OPERATIVES OF COTTON MILLS,
BY
THE AUTHOR.



KATE STANTON'S PREFACE.

DEAR PUBLIC :

ROSA was going to tell you in a preface, how she got her "Cotton Mill" started. But, I said, not a bit of it, Rosa, for it will take my 'World' and all the power and magic of my pen, to do justice to those kind Cambridge gentlemen, who furnished the capital for that little workshop.

My "World" will get a jog by-and-by, and some will find themselves in the shadow, and some in the broad golden sunlight, right beside those good Cambridge gentlemen, only a good way behind, and some will go to verdure. So, Mr. Public, if you want to find yourself in a favorable light, and conspicuous place, just be liberal in patronizing the firm of "Effie and I" and Co., in their travels through Uncle Sam's domains. It is just the book for everybody, and nothing can eclipse it but my "World," Longfellow excepted. It will cure the hypo

and all disagreeable sensations in the head, by laughing you into convulsions or a healthful perspiration, which will prove more effectual than all the doctor's bags and bills in Christendom. I ain't sure but what it will put down rebeldom, and send all secesh to the Shampeaceso territories, or the Pee-wee Islands. At any rate, it will work wonders in camp-life, and tell them that cotton ain't dead at the North, although he can't be king of rebeldom. Exit.

KATE STANTON.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE NINETEENTH of April, 1861. How white, and thick, and fast the snow came down. How merrily it flew through the air, and danced Yankee reels, to the shrill pipings of old Boreas, upon the broad pavements. How sly and saucily it kissed the cold cheeks of bachelor pedestrians, reminding them of loving lips and dimpled cheeks, in the long, long ago. How the restless school-boy shouted and floundered in the feathery wreaths, laughing in high glee, at the mischief those fairy revellers were making with his sister's sunny ringlets, twining a wreath of fantastic beauty around her fair young brow.

It was a regal gala day with old dame Nature; her winding-up season ball. Nobody in the City of Spindles ever witnessed such a carnival as that which dame Nature held on the 19th of April, 1861. All Lowell

was astir too; far above the shrill piping and blustering of old Boreas, came the loud, hasty war-cry — “To arms! to arms!” Every heart was athrob with patriotism. Every soul was ignited with loyalty. Every manly arm was ready to strike for freedom and the right; and every wife, mother, and sister were ready for the sacrifice.

What shouts rent the air when the glorious Sixth, the first to respond to the clarion call, the first to shed the martyr’s blood, the first to wear a martyr’s crown,—with waving plumes and floating banners, went out from the lofty archway of Huntington Hall station, led on by the brave, heroic Butler, and his fearless lifeguards.

Who ever witnessed such a hasty response to the bugle’s call! Such a kindling of patriotism! Such a mingling of brave hearts and sinewy arms, to protect the glorious institutions of their native land.

It was a proud day for the mothers and daughters of the Spindle City; and even dame Nature put on her gala robes, and danced and piped joyously, while she twined her fantastic wreaths around the brows of those brave and loyal volunteers.

My whole soul was gushing with enthusiasm for the patriotic loyalty which characterized the noble sons of

the Spindle City, — the city of my adoption ; when, like a floating iceberg upon a tropical sea, Mrs. Allstone — and there are many Mrs. Allstones in every community — made her appearance, equipped for a leave-taking and a journey.

“Where away, Mrs. Allstone?” I inquired as she settled herself most unceremoniously among my writing materials and patriotic effusions, which the occurrences of the day had called forth.

“Oh!” she answered, “I am sick of this low, detestable Spindle City ; and I am determined to take up my line of march, and flee from it, as Lot fled from the doomed city of Sodom ; and I shall be in no danger of becoming petrified, as was his foolish wife, by looking back with any desire to return to its vices and vanities.”

“You are beside yourself, Mrs. Allstone,” I answered. “What mean you, by such unjust epithets applied to our goodly city.”

“What mean I, Mrs. Hartwell? Ask the widow who has been defrauded of her little competence, by that wicked Dives who rides in his fur-lined carriage, and gloats himself with the luxuries upon his sumptuous table.

“Ask her fatherless children, who fain would satisfy

their cravings of hunger with the crumbs that fall unheeded at his feet.

“ Ask those, whose shivering, half-clad forms, in vain seek the warmth of the expiring embers to relax the palsied limbs, and stir the life-current which moves with the sluggishness of death through the half frozen thoroughfares of the heart.

“ Ask that deserted wife, who, in her desolate and comfortless abode, bends anxiously and tearfully over her suffering child, bathing his parched lips with her fond kisses ; cooling his fevered brow with the tears that gush forth from her agonized heart ; never relaxing her watchful vigil through the long, lone night hours, lest her darling babe, in his fevered restlessness, expose his tender limbs to the cold, chilling atmosphere of her comfortless chamber.

“ Listen to her anguished heart-throbbings, and half-frenzied invocations to the God of the friendless, mingling with the night dirges which sweep in moaning response back to her widowed heart.

“ Ask her faithless husband, who, all unheedful of their wrongs and sufferings, lavishes his smiles and his gold alike upon the vile partner of his guilty desertion ; casting aside as a thing of naught the holy bonds of

his marriage vows ; the pure and holy love of a truthful heart, a father's godlike responsibility, and the elevating and ennobling position which they command in the world. All these are as naught, while the voice of his guilty syren lures him on, on, blinded by her fiendish fascinations to destruction and death.

“Ask the debauchee, who hastens to his infamous resort with the last dime, for which his children are starving or freezing in the pitiless blast ; and the horde of wretched creatures whose gay robes sweep flauntingly through the streets, divested of the pure shining circlet with which Virtue designates her children ; and see the long train of blinded votaries which follow, and their name is legion. Ask those who hold the scales of law and power, and controvert that of justice, what I mean.

“Then go into those living tombs, those slave-palaces, and see the pale, shrinking, overtasked thousands, toiling on, year after year, for the mere pittance to prolong a miserable existence,—and for what ?

“To fill the coffers of the wealthy capitalists, and rear marble palaces for their aristocratic sons and daughters, who would not deign to have them touch the

hem of their golden drapery, lest it should be polluted by their plebeian proximity."

"Really, Mrs. Allstone, you have got off a long yarn, without the aid of 'Roper,' or 'Spinning Jenny.' But I must contend, that you have given only the dark side of the picture.

"Your Dives, or his counterpart, will be found in almost every city and clime in the wide world; and so will be his wronged and suffering victims. But they, like Lazarus of old, will at last find a resting-place in Abraham's bosom, while Dives is famishing for a drop of water to cool his burning tongue.

"And the husband, who would desert a true and faithful wife in the City of Spindles, would, if in paradise, desert the fairest daughter of Eve to follow the fascinating trail of the hissing serpent into a thicket of thorns.

"Lowell is not a paradise, I will admit; yet there is much of good illuminating and spanning, like the bow of hope and promise, the dark picture you have presented to my view. To me it seems an asylum for the oppressed, a home for the homeless, and a broad highway leading to wealth and honor.

"The influence of the Spindle City is felt throughout

almost the entire universe. It is one of the main-springs which moves the great wheel of enterprise and commerce.

“Food and clothing have gone out from her portals to the starving sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle, as though they had been brothers and sisters of the same paternal roof.

“Kansas, bleeding, famishing, and dying, has revived again, and put on her beautiful garments of hope and strength, when the full-freighted ship has neared her borders, which Lowell has contributed to send forth to her aid.

“And this is not all. Lowell has sent out, and not stintily, the bread of life to far distant India. And from what you have termed ‘slave-palaces,’ ‘living tombs,’ have gone out missionaries, ministers, lawyers, doctors, poets, and artists, that will compare, nay, compete, with many that have been reared in the hot-beds of affluence and ease. And, may-be, our nation’s future president is even now the little sooty bobbin-boy, bashfully going his rounds in that humble capacity.

“Ask them where they received their first inspirations, and they will tell you amidst the clattering of machinery in the busy Spindle City.

“ Call it not a life of oppression, while the rose-tinted cheek, and beaming eye, glows with animation and happiness ; while the elastic, graceful step, the light, joyous song, the clear silvery laugh, tell not of laborious toil, or wearying care.

“ Ask that widowed mother, in some obscure country town, who, perhaps, for months and years has been a helpless invalid, what has brought back the light of happiness to her eye, the glow of health to her cheek, and the smile to her lips ; and she will tell you, that, away in the busy Spindle City, her fatherless children have found a home, and are steadily acquiring a competence for all their need.

“ The capitalists, whom you have designated proud and aristocratic, are truly their benefactors.

“ Visit the hundreds of large, commodious factory boarding-houses, and see the poor widows, with their fatherless children installed there, surrounded by every comfort, while their children are receiving an education which will fit them for any position, however honorable, in life. And when panics and famines, and other calamities, have visited the land, have these wealthy factory capitalists crushed these poor widows with an iron heel, or ground the faces of the poor into the dust of the earth ?

“No; through the long cold winters they have lived securely in their factory homes, rent free. Not a tithe has been demanded from the widow or her little competence to swell the purse of the millionaire, till prosperity again visits the land.

“Yes, ah yes, your ‘slave-prisons,’ and ‘charnel-houses,’ are the very life-springs of the whole universe. Let some formidable panic stop the evolutions of the great wheel of manufacture in our Spindle City, and, like electricity, the effects of that result reaches from pole to pole.

“The factory system is not, as you have hinted, demoralizing in its tendency. Its every regulation strictly prohibits immorality, and demands of every operative a strict observance of the Sabbath and its holy institutions. Vice and immorality are not engendered by the wholesome laws and discipline of factory life.

“Many who have come here vile and degraded, have soon been led into the higher walks of virtue and sobriety, by the kindly hand and angelic sympathy of some of the good factory missionaries.

“Yes, amongst our operatives there are many missionaries, many good Samaritans, who are working for

God and eternity in that vast harvest-field; the result of whose labors will only be known when the Father judges and rewards the works of the faithful.

“A thousand times more truly are those men the real benefactors of the widow, the orphan, and the poor generally, than those who build almshouses, asylums, and other institutions of charity; where those who enter eke out a miserable existence of dependent beggary, instead of the competence acquired by their own cheerful, enervating, and elevating industry, amidst the clattering of machinery in the various departments of factory operations.

“You look incredulous, Mrs. Allstone, but I will prove to you that I have not exaggerated, by giving you a sketch of my own experience of factory life within this same, and to you, detestable City of Spindles.”



EFFIE AND I;

OR,

SEVEN YEARS IN A COTTON MILL.

CHAPTER I.

MY CHILDHOOD'S HOME. — FAMILY JOYS AND BEREAVEMENTS. —
A DEATHBED SCENE.

THAT LITTLE brown cottage! How vividly it rises to my view, nestled so quietly beneath the shadowy branches of that wide-spreading oak; and beneath it, on the green turf, are half a score of laughing, rollicking boys and girls, singing, chatting, and romping, — from the silver-haired baby, to the rough blowsy boy in his teens.

How they made the glens and woodlands send back the mocking echo of their merriment, till it became almost a scene of enchantment, peopled with invisible and fairy-like revellers.

Again I stand within the vast arena of those magnificent hills, where above and beneath, the mighty forests throw their sombre shadows, or lift the glossy foliage of their gigantic branches to the whispering zephyrs, which float lazily along in a summer twilight, laden with the rich fragrance gathered from the sweet fresh wild-flowers, hidden beneath the tangled brushwood.

Again I listen, half-entranced, to the wild melody gushing out from the forest vistas, sweet and soul-stirring as the dulcet strains which vibrate upon a wind-swept æolian.

Again I look with admiration upon the broad lakes, which lay side by side, like loving sisters, till their white-crested wave, sweeping gracefully over the surface, mingle into one.

I follow the windings of the murmuring streams, half hidden by shrubbery and lily-beds, laying like crests of laurel and pearl upon the sparkling wave.

Again I see the broad fields, in the golden harvest month, and listen to the songs of the happy reaper, while he binds his heavy sheaves, or bears them in triumph to his home — sweet home.

I hear the lowing of the herds, and the bleating of the flocks upon the adjacent hills, or sit spell-bound beneath the broad harvest-moon, laying like a sheet of golden lava upon our cottage home, and the adjacent woodlands ; where the owls “ too-hoo ” far away in the old

hollow he has chosen for his retreat, mingles in rough cadence with the distant waterfall and the shrill chirp of the harvest insects.

I see the old school-house upon the brow of the hill, and hear the wild rush of childish feet and long pent up mirthfulness, as one after another comes dashing and bounding through the old porch like the frogs of Egypt, impatient to destroy every impeding and opposing obstacle before them.

Again I hear the dreamy tap—tap—tap of the summer showers, falling upon the tufts of moss, chucked here and there within the gaping crevices of our own little brown cot, and see the bright sunbeams shimmering playfully through the loose shingles, reveling here and there in fantastic shapes, like a whole troop of frolicksome fairies, upon the rough, unpainted floor.

And the old oak-tree sways its branches to and fro over the tufts of moss and gaping crevices, while beneath its deep foliage the lark chants his lay, and the whippoorwill sings his plaintive good-night.

Again I see the bright wild-flowers spring up beneath the low hedge, and the soft breezes waft their sweet aroma through the low casements, sprinkling here and there their fresh perfume upon little knots of shining curls, kissing in playful mood the fair white brows half hidden beneath them.

The silvery moonbeams never bathed the battlements of a regal home more gorgeously or witchingly than they did the moss-tufted roof of our own little cot.

And then the merry huskings, and apple-parings, and quilting parties, and evening dances, where, with buoyant step and lighter hearts, we danced away the long autumn evenings, till the small hours chimed ominously from the tall, old-fashioned clock in the hall. And then the happy good-nights, as we left one after another of our companions, till we reached our own quiet home, beneath the swaying branches of the old oak-tree.

Oh, yes! I remember it now, when the long winter evenings came; then came the merry sleigh-bells to our cottage door, till the rooms were filled with the comely lads and lasses of Seclusivale, with viols, flutes, and fifes, and voices all in tune for a right good old-fashioned sing.

Our father was a music-teacher, and my mother, I never heard her voice excelled, so clear, melodious, and soul-stirring; and then half a score of us beside, all with voices which defied competition. Oh, how many, many, many times, when I have sat, deserted and alone, in my comfortless room, have my thoughts reverted to those happy winter evenings in my childhood's home, where the voices of music and gladness reverberated till the forests and glens almost sent back an answering response.

There were my parents, brothers, and sisters, eleven of

us all, and I did not dream that the links which bound us together could be severed in the bright sunny days of our beauty and youth.

The first great sorrow came like a dark, fearful shadow. It fell alike upon our hearts and home. It was in the harvest month, when the reapers were gathering the yellow corn and full ripe sheafs into the garner.

When the summer flowers were fading and drooping, one after another, from the parent stem; when the fields and forests were gorgeous with the rainbow hues the forest king had painted; when the sky looked regal with crimson and gold, mingled with the dark, heavy folds of the threatening storm-cloud; when the birds were chanting their farewell songs in their summer bowers, and the cold winds were sweeping relentlessly over the distant mountains.

I remember it well; it was one of those dreamy, hazy, sunny days of autumn, that a group of friends and neighbors were gathered in the little darkened chamber where she lay, our sister, the eldest of our happy band.

A long while she had been drooping, till her slight form seemed almost ethereal, and her large blue eyes beamed with a radiance so spiritual and holy, that, child as I was, I felt awed with the angelic and heavenly expression which radiated every feature of her pale, wan face.

Oh, she was beautiful as she lay there, with her brow

clear and white as Parian marble, pressed against the pillow, contrasting so strangely with the deep crimson upon the wasted cheek, and the light which shone out from the clear depths of her large blue eyes, partially shaded by the long damp masses of golden curls, which lay in careless negligence around her neck and brow.

Our parish minister was there too ; and his voice went up in a heart-felt benediction to the Holy of Holies, for her who lay just upon the verge of heaven ; beholding even then with her spirit-vision the glories of the New Jerusalem.

He sprinkled the baptismal waters upon her upturned brow, and administered to her the emblems of a Saviour's love.

Then they chanted a low sweet hymn, spoke to us kindly words of sympathy, and a tearful farewell to the dying one, and the room was left silent and vacant, save only by the little band which yet remained unbroken.

A few days more passed away, and then she lay tranquil as marble in her death-robcs. Death awed me ; beautiful as she lay there, I could not look upon her ; and I fled to my mother's room, to pour out my first sorrow upon her maternal bosom.

O my mother ! my mother ! I never shall forget that scene. There she knelt, pale as the death-form I had fled from, in tearless and silent communion with God and the freed spirit of her eldest born which was then

hovering over her, clothed in the beautiful garments of sainted immortality.

I spoke not—I moved not,—for I felt that a holy unction had fallen upon her and that home of death. The hand of God was upon us; and I then knew that it was not in anger He had afflicted us, but in merciful kindness.

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CHAPTER II.

THE BURIAL. — AN UNBIDDEN GUEST. — THE CROSS AND
THE CROWN.

THE DAY of burial came ; and oh, I felt it was a sacrilege to lay her, beautiful as she was, beneath the cold, damp turf.

When the spring-time came again the trees bloomed over her grave, and the wild flowers sprang up around the raised turf ; and then we sat there many an hour, and talked of her, and sang the songs she loved to hear. We nestled more closely together in our own home nest. Our mirthfulness was more subdued, our songs more plaintive, and although a link was broken in our little band, and we missed her sweet smiles and sisterly counsellings, yet we mourned not without hope, for was not one of us a white-robed angel, and were there not many yet remaining to bind us to our earth-home, to guide and cheer us through the sunny paths of childhood and youth ?

And we thought, too, that the cravings of the death-angel were appeased ; that not for many, many years, would his bony fingers rap again at the door of our happy, though humble home.

Our eyes were bright and sparkling; our cheeks round and ruddy; our songs gushed forth from lightsome hearts; our steps light and free as health and buoyancy could make them. Oh, no, there was no more work for the death-angel in our home.

Our mother's cheek grew paler and more wan, to be sure; her slight form, oh, so like a shadow; but her eyes were bright, her brow so serene, and we knew that she prayed often, very often, to Him who had taken her eldest born, in the bloom and beauty of youth, to become an heir with Him, and joint heir with Jesus Christ, within the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.

But the death-angel would spare her! he would not, he could not, take her from us!

Again it is autumn; twice has the song of the reapers floated out upon the evening breezes in the golden harvest-month; since the death-angel shattered the earth-clogs, and our sister Olivia soared away to the higher life in the city of our God.

Far away over the western hills the broad red sun is sinking to repose beneath the rich drapery that hangs in gorgeous festoons from the blue canopy above, throwing a halo of beauty over hill and dale.

From the deep sombre recesses of the adjacent forests comes the clear rich strains of the night-bird, imparting a peaceful delight to the weary, and filling the still evening air with plaintive melody.

The shadows of evening are gathering quietly around

the old oak-tree, which throws its gigantic arms so protectingly over our cottage home. We are awed with the imposing stillness which pervades it, till the very foot-fall seems a sacrilege.

Step reverently; for a mighty conqueror is even now waiting for admission, bearing a message from the King of kings. Step softly; for holy angels are bending over the couch of the dying one, chanting the strains of the New Jerusalem; binding upon her marble brow — already glowing with a holy radiance — the crown of the faithful and the redeemed.

Step lightly; for loved ones are kneeling by the sick one's couch, and the gushing tears of heart-felt sorrow are falling unchecked upon the snowy drapery. Bleeding hearts are offering up their silent and fervent invocations to Heaven's throne. Oh! it is a holy place; just on the verge of the spirit-world; and every breath seems wafted from Elysian bowers.

Step aside; for the grim messenger approaches. He heeds not the prayers, the tears, the sighs, nor the beseeching looks of love. He cares not for the vacant chair, the deserted hearth, the bleeding hearts, the orphan's tears.

He lays his icy hand upon that ashy brow, already crowned with a halo of glory.

He shuts out from her mortal vision the dear, familiar objects of home, and the little flock her love has so tenderly sheltered, and opens to her wandering view

the dazzling glories of the spirit-world, with the great white throne, the Lamb, and the blood-washed throng; the immaculate robes, the palms, the crowns, the harps of gold, the tree of life, bending beneath delicious fruit.

The golden gates are swung, and she sees streets of pearl, placid rivers, smooth as polished silver; and hears far, far away, strains from seraph, harp, and lyre.

Hushed was the voice that had so often made our quick pulses leap with joy. The fond smile was chilled upon her icy lips; the thin hands were clasped peacefully over the rigid breast; the white drapery folded gracefully over the marble features, and all that was of earth earthy, was given back to corruption.

In the little burying-ground where she had so often knelt and prayed over the grave of her eldest born, they reverently bore our mother to her silent resting-place.

We bowed to the smiting rod; but our bruised and bleeding hearts told how deeply and surely the shaft had pierced them.

How, in the silent anguish of my stricken heart, I prayed to lay me down beside the senseless form they slowly laid within the open vault. But the death-angel comes not at our bidding, and they bore me back to the desolations of a motherless home. Who can portray the heart-anguish of bereaved ones when they return from a mother's burial to the desolate home. Words are a mockery at description.

There stands the old arm-chair in its accustomed nook, but the occupant is not there. The well-worn Bible lays in the selfsame spot upon the shelf where her hands had placed it. The bed where she suffered and died is draped in fresh white linen, and bears no token of a recent occupant. The table is spread, but a neighbor assumes the place erst made sacred by a mother's presence.

With awe and hushed silence we gather around the once cheerful fireside ; we turn at a thought, a word, for the approving smile, or look of approbation, but she is not there ; the death-angel has borne her away, away to the mansions of rest in the happy spirit-world ; where she no longer feels pain or weariness ; where her spirit bounds with all the freshness and vigor of youth ; and her form, light and ethereal, floats gracefully along over streets of pearl and glittering gold, to the throne of the Immaculate, to mingle her notes of praise with myriad angel voices to the Lamb who sits thereon, arrayed in the dazzling glory of His majesty and power.

Closer we nestled together, while we wept, and prayed, and mourned for the mother, who in love had sheltered her little flock from the storms and blasts of a pitiless world ; and we felt that God might have spared her yet a little longer to her tender lambs. But we saw not the frightful herd of hungry wolves, crouching without the fold, impatient to suck the life-blood of the flock, which had been sheltered only by a mother's tenderest care.

CHAPTER III.

OUR HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER.

THE COLD dark days of winter came ; but the evenings were no longer whiled away in merry pastime. The viol and flute no longer reverberated through those hushed apartments. The lightsome song and gleeful laugh were strangers to our bereaved hearts. And we wept, as we nestled closer together by the evening fireside, for the mother's love which had forever departed from that silent hearth.

Then the spring-time came, and the summer flowers bloomed over the grave of mother and sister, side by side, which our little hands had planted there. But the death-angel was not appeased ; for ere the summer flowers had faded from off the turf reared above their graves, he came again ; and oh, so fearful was his coming.

Our eldest brothers, two of them, were stricken down in the vigor and beauty of early manhood, with scarcely a moment's warning of their fearful dissolution.

Frank, our brave and noble sailor boy, found a grave

beneath the blue waves he loved so well, far, far away from our desolate home; and Harry, the free, jovial, graceful Harry, just one week later, was stricken down by an epidemic which swept fearfully through a distant city, where he had hoped to win fortune and favor by genius and toil.

Oh, the pall-like gloom! how heavily it fell upon our hearts and home, wrapping us closer and closer within its sable folds. Neighbors gathered around us with words of sympathy and condolence; but we could not be comforted.

Long we had listened for their approaching footfall, in hopeful expectancy that the tales they might tell us of sea and land would dissipate somewhat the gloom which shrouded our desolate home.

But instead of their cheering presence, two letters, draped in black, told us a tale too fearful for our stricken and bleeding hearts to bear; and again we bowed to the scourging lacerations of the bereaving rod. Six of us then remained; some in early childhood, and Carro, the oldest, scarcely in the prime of girlhood. Yet all the duties and responsibilities attendant upon us and home rested upon her.

She struggled nobly with her unused task, casting all her cares upon Him who was able to sustain her. But He had another mission for her to perform, a higher and nobler work, in the mansions He had prepared for her.

And so we saw her cheek pale, day by day, her eye grow more lustrous, her slight form more fragile, and that same hoarse, hollow cough, — oh, we had heard it long before ; and we knew she, too, must die.

When the summer flowers had bloomed twice over our mother's grave, and the cold blasts of winter had folded over them a winding-sheet, spotless and pure as an angel's drapery, then sister Carro laid aside her earth-tasks, which had been so faithfully and lovingly performed, and, in the spring-tide of youth and beauty, calmly resigned herself to the repose of death and the tomb.

Angels had called her away, with their soft, sweet whisperings ; and, calm and silently as the passing of the summer zephyr, she soared away from the earth-clogs, to mingle her songs with those who had gone before, in the happy spirit-land, where the weary are for ever at rest.

Surely the heart knows not how much it can bear, until it is brought to the test. Other sorrows awaited us, aside from the bereavement which death had wrought upon us.

The meagre hand of poverty was stalking around our dwelling. We heard his iron heel upon the threshold, and his gaunt form threw a frightful shadow through the desolate apartments.

His sharp fingers clutched mercilessly our delicate

frames ; his stony eyes chilled the life-blood in our young and sensitive hearts, as he bound us with his heavy manacles, and made us the helpless slaves of his tyranny and power.

Who will say that poverty is a blessing, and welcome his approach as an ambassador of peace and contentment ?

He may come as a blessing to the gloated, gouty votary of luxury and ease, who groans and grapples with his gluttonous disease upon a bed of softest down, till he curses the wealth he has so sinfully abused, and his Maker, too, for the life which is prolonged, to endure his merited sufferings. But not to the little motherless flock, who shrank with fear and trembling from his pitiless grasp, did he come as a blessing, or a messenger of good.

He was there ; his hard heel was grinding us into the very dust of the earth ; and it was then we felt that the death-angel were a thousand times more welcome than the tyrant, which stalked so frightfully around our little cot.

Our father had become disheartened ; his strong frame yielded unresistingly to the bereaving rod ; a dark cloud shadowed his home, and it had become dreary and insupportable to him. He fled from it to new scenes and new associations ; and, in the excitements of the busy city, sought forgetfulness of the unhappy past.

But memory is a faithful attendant, which neither time nor distance, pleasure or pain, can annihilate.

We had one brother, a noble, studious boy, whose heart yearned and aspired to an honorable name and position amongst the famed literati of the land. But the fond anticipations of his young heart had been blasted. Poverty had reared an impenetrable bulwark between him and the boon he so ardently craved, which only time, toil, and perseverance could demolish.



CHAPTER IV.

OUR BROTHER'S DREAM.—HIS GUIDE THROUGH THE FOREST.—
HER CASTLE HOME.

ONE MORNING, as he seated himself at our scantily furnished breakfast table, he joyfully exclaimed, "O my sisters! I have had such a dream! It even now seems a vivid reality.

"I thought I wandered alone, alone through a dense forest. So intricate were its windings and thick branches, that not even the sun's rays could penetrate through the thick, dark foliage. Narrow footpaths branched out on every side, leading to the high, verdure-crowned mountains, with which the forest was surrounded.

"The free, gushing melody of the wild-birds' song came floating on the fragrant zephyrs from their sunny bowers. The low murmuring of distant water-falls reached my ears, mingled with the hum of happy voices, and my heart yearned to join in the festive joys of those rural scenes.

"Exhilarated with hope and buoyancy I turned into one of the most inviting footpaths; but I soon found

it was overgrown with sharp thorns and briers, which tore my garments and lacerated my flesh, so that I was unable to proceed.

“I turned to another, but was soon lost in its dark, narrow, and intricate windings. And then another seemed to invite me, and I followed on, and on, till it terminated abruptly above a deep, dark, yawning abyss.

“Faint and weary, I sat me down, hopelessly, upon the hard fragments of a jutting rock, and wept. Clouds were gathering darkly and ominously around me; the deep, heavy thunders roared fearfully in the distance.

“I could not retrace my steps, for the increasing blackness of the approaching storm hid from my view the narrow footpath which had guided me thither. I could not proceed, for the dark abyss yawned to engulf me. I stretched myself hopelessly upon the cold, damp ground, and gave myself up to weeping and despair.

“The storm became darker and more terrific; the lightnings flashed vividly, and the thunders came booming and crashing through the deep, dark vistas of the old forest, like the deafening artillery of a mighty war-troop. I looked up through the blinding tears, for just then I felt a hand laid lightly upon my shoulders.

“A tall form bent over me, enveloped in a dark, flowing mantle, half concealing her features, while the long white hair floated, like snow-flakes, upon the pass-

ing breeze. Her arm was upraised, and her long, bony fingers pointed ominously to the approaching storm.

“ ‘Arise, young man,’ she said, ‘why tarryest thou in the forest? Seest thou not the storm approaching? Fearest thou not the thunder’s crashing roar? the lightning’s vivid flash? the tornado’s withering blast? Arise; flee to the mountains, lest they bury thee beneath the oblivious gulf.’

“ ‘Alas!’ I answered, despondingly, ‘I know not the way; and there is none to guide me. Thrice have I attempted it, and as often have been driven back by some formidable, impeding barrier.’

“ ‘Perseverance would have surmounted all those formidable barriers,’ she answered, as she bent her keen, dark eyes upon me. ‘Just beyond that thicket of thorns, which you so much feared, was a broad, smooth path, leading, with a gradual and pleasant ascent, directly to the mountains. Perennial flowers bloom on either side, wooing and refreshing the traveller with their aromatic odors.

“ ‘The other path was more circuitous; requiring more time, labor, patience, and a keener penetration. For if you had raised your eyes, instead of keeping them upon the brush-wood and pebbles beneath your feet, you would have seen finger-posts, directing you ever and invariably to the right. And then you would have escaped the seemingly pleasant path, which lured you onward, and onward to this frightful gulf.’

“I shuddered, and cast my eyes fearfully down to the yawning abyss.

“‘Who art thou?’ I inquired, turning to the strange being beside me. ‘Who knowest so well the forest paths and the mountain heights. Wilt thou direct me to the broad highway, that I be not again driven back in dismay by formidable barriers.’

“‘I am,’ she answered, ‘the Genius of the forest. My castle is on the highest pinnacle of the mountain’s brow.

“‘I wander forth, from the sunny bowers of my mountain home, through the dark forest windings, in search of those who have foolishly strayed, or lost their way in the many narrow and seemingly intricate windings of this lowland forest.

“‘Many I have extricated from the brink of this fearful abyss, whom I have afterwards crowned with a fadeless laurel.

“‘And many have perished here for lack of courage to surmount the threatening barriers, or strength to ascend the mountain path.

“‘Will you go?’ she asked. ‘The forest is dark, the paths narrow and uneven; the thunders howl fearfully through the deep vistas; the scorching lightnings are flashing and hissing through the swaying branches; the tornado’s roar comes booming from the distant plains.

“ ‘ Remain, and you perish. Go, and you ——.’ She raised her arm, and pointed significantly to her far off mountain home.

“ ‘ I will go,’ I answered, as, with a quick gesture, I reached forth my hand to her, ‘ if you will lead me through the dark, narrow forest paths.’

“ ‘ For a sudden faintness came over me, when I thought of my previous attempt to penetrate the thicket of thorns; and I fain would have a companion to battle with me those formidable opponents.

“ ‘ I will guide you,’ she answered, waving back my extended hand, ‘ but I cannot lead you. The path is narrow, follow.

“ ‘ Depend upon your own strength, your own exertions. Remember that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but those who persevere to the end shall win the prize.

“ ‘ Look not to the right nor to the left, nor back upon the forest; but keep your eye steadily upon the mountain.

“ ‘ If you fearlessly follow me through the dark forest windings, you can walk by my side when we emerge into the broad, mountain path; and when you gain the dizzy heights of yonder pinnacle, you shall be an honored guest within my castle home.’

“ She said no more, but turned into a path which I had not before observed, and glided noiselessly along

through the windings, which grew broader and pleasanter, as we progressed in our journey.

“ Soon I began to feel sensible of a gradual ascent; but it was pleasant and less fatiguing than the narrow forest paths.

“ My guide turned to me and said, approvingly, ‘ Thus far you have gained the victory,’ and added, as she bent her dark eyes searchingly upon me, —

“ ‘ The will opens to us the way. We have gained the mountain path, and now you are worthy to walk by my side.’

“ The dark clouds had all disappeared; the calm blue sky was over us; the warm, dazzling sunbeams lay, like a flood of golden lava, over the deep rich verdure that crowned the mountain side.

“ Soft whispering zephyrs, heavy with the fragrance of aromatic flowers, came floating lazily by, mingled with the wild birds’ gushing melody from their own native bowers.

“ Half bewildered with the intoxicating scene, I knew not that I had been making any advancement, till I found myself upon the dizzy heights of the mountain brow.

“ ‘ Behold,’ said my guide, ‘ the reward of perseverance.’

“ And she reached forth her hand, and waived a glittering sceptre over broad plains, upon which the golden sun rays lay in liquid beauty.

“I cast my eyes upon the plains below, and a scene more beautiful than imagination had ever portrayed to me, met my wandering vision.

“Cities and towns lay there, interspersed with rich vales and flowing streams. Broad fields, where the golden harvest swayed to and fro in the sunlight like the ocean waves.

“Deep shady woodlands, where birds of brilliant plumage warbled their delicious songs, all met my bewildered gaze; and I turned inquiringly to my guide. ‘They are yours,’ she said, ‘the prize is at the end of the race.’

“Hadst thou remained in the forest, ere this thou wouldst have been lost in oblivion. Behold the reward of perseverance!’ She drew from her girdle a laurel wreath, upon which was inscribed, in golden letters, ‘fame.’

“‘I crown you,’ she said, twining the wreath upon my brow, ‘I crown you the rightful monarch here. My castle shall be your fortress, and this lofty pinnacle your throne.’

“‘Who art thou?’ I said, casting myself in bewildered astonishment at her feet.

“Her long flowing mantle fell to the ground, revealing a face and form, so dazzlingly beautiful. — Oh! I can never describe it; but upon her fair, Parian brow, rested a lustrous crown, upon which glittered, among costly gems, ‘Genius.’

“I sprang to embrace her, and awoke only to find myself lost in the dark forest windings and thorny thickets of poverty, or laying myself hopelessly down upon the fearful brink of the yawning abyss of inaction and despair. But the crown of perseverance I may still obtain, by following the genius of the mountain, the ‘I will,’ of the forest windings. It is that magical power which will carry us to the pinnacle of fame and fortune, and spread at our feet the broad harvest fields and golden sheaves, bathed in liquid sunlight, as a reward for all our toil.

“What others have accomplished before me, I can accomplish, I will accomplish. Our dear mother often told us that God would help those who would help themselves. And I believe it. But I must leave you; this is no place for me. My path to the mountain may be far from here, but I know that the God whom my sainted mother delighted to honor, will guide me to it.

“And when I stand upon the mountain’s height, reaping the laurels which toil and perseverance have strewn for me, then, my sisters, you shall share with me the blessings of Him who has bereaved us, and desolated our home in our life’s gushing springtide. Not in anger, I trust, has He shattered our earth-idols; but in merciful kindness, that we might become heirs with them to an inheritance which no death-king can wrest from us.”

We prepared as best we could the scanty wardrobe,

and when all had been nicely packed within the little valise, then we laid upon the top the tiny Bible, with its shining clasp, which had been our mother's in the days of happy girlhood. And upon a delicate fly-leaf we traced this injunction: "Remember thy mother's instructions, and forget not the teachings which her little Bible contains. They will lead you safely through the dangerous paths of youth, and crown you with honor lofty as heaven, and endurable as eternity."



CHAPTER V.

THE SEPARATIONS. — VISIT OF TWO YOUNG LADIES FROM LOWELL.
— THEIR GLOWING DESCRIPTIONS OF FACTORY LIFE. — MY
RESOLVE AND TRIALS.

ANOTHER GREAT trial awaited us. Our father's small remittances were not sufficient for the four young and inexperienced girls, who still remained in the little cot, nestled so lovingly beneath the shadow of the old oak-tree.

There were no manufactories, no needle-work, no straw braiding, near our far-off country home, that we might apply ourselves to the needful task of money-making, in order to sustain ourselves comfortably in our loved, though desolate home ; and we saw no alternative but a separation.

Matta, the oldest of us, was a brave, healthy, rosy-cheeked girl, who neither yielded to impossibilities, nor crouched before the tyrant, who swayed his fearful sceptre around our little dwelling.

With her to resolve, was to execute. Farmers' wives were busy with the wheel and the loom, and she met with no obstruction in procuring a place (at fifty cents a week), well suited to her active temperament and genial

disposition, with a well-to-do farmer's family, just over the hill, all in sight of the blue smoke which rose in graceful curves through the branches of the old oak above our cottage home.

Then there was little Lula, our baby sister, with knots of shining curls clustering all around her fair brow, like a cloud of sunbeam; and her pale, fragile sister-mate, delicate as the snow-wreath, and sensitive as the trembling aspen.

They must be separated. They who had slept in each other's arms almost from infancy; whose every thought and expression had been that of one mind; whose lessons had been conned from the same book; who had romped together, chasing the shadows and the sunbeams upon the green turf, beneath the old oak which shook his heavy branches playfully to the passing zephyrs.

They who nightly, with hand clasped in hand, had mingled their voices together in prayer to the God who shelters the motherless lambs of the flock in the bosom of His divine love.

They who had mingled their tears in childish grief over the cold, rigid features of a dead mother, and wondered if she would not send for them to come to her beautiful home in the far blue sky, that the good angels had prepared for her.

Oh, they had been very happy till mother died; for she had sheltered her little flock with tenderest solici-

tude, till the death-angel called her away, and placed upon her brow the dazzling coronet prepared for those who so faithfully perform their earth-mission.

But now she could no longer ward off the merciless fangs of the gaunt tyrant, which stalked so fearfully around our quiet home; and they, our baby sisters, must be separated, and seek a shelter by a stranger's fireside.

None but God saw the tears that were shed by the flickering flames of our desolate hearthstone. None but God heard the cries and prayers of anguish that went up from our bruised and bleeding hearts to Him who heedeth the sparrow's fall, and clothes the lilies of the field in their beautiful raiment.

None but God knew how mercilessly the gaunt tyrant clutched at our vitals, or chilled the warm life-blood in our young veins, to satisfy his imperious and relentless demands.

And so our baby sisters were separated miles away, and I remained alone in that desolate home.

No language can portray the anguish of my heart, as I wept and prayed to the orphan's God for strength to go out into the pitiless world, and to bear meekly the burden which He had laid upon me.

I opened the old family Bible—my mother's Bible—to Psalm 91st. I felt that the words were prophetic, and arose from my kneeling position comforted and strengthened in Him who doeth all things well.

Some young ladies had just returned from Lowell, and

by their glowing descriptions of factory life, induced me, with some of my young associates, to return with them to the busy Spindle City.

Always of a delicate constitution and feeble health, I could not, with Matta, engage in the more hardy employments of domestic life, and I had no means to devote myself to study and the fine arts which I had so ardently and hopefully desired.

And so I, who had scarcely ever lost sight of my cottage home and the old oak swaying its branches so lovingly above it, resolved to venture far away, and become an operative in a cotton mill.

The very idea was repulsive to my delicate and sensitive nature. Must I go where the learned and the unlearned, the old and young, beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice, all mingled together in one common mass, with no nice distinctions by the lookers-on, but all placed upon the low vulgar grade of "Operatives?" But there seemed no alternative; necessity compelled me, and I had only to obey her mandates.

I sought the little room where my mother's last look rested upon me; where her last breath embalmed my brow like a holy anointing from the spirit world. And there I knelt and prayed to Him who had said, "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then I will take thee up."

I there and then committed myself to his merciful care, and felt that my trust was not in vain.

It seemed that the spirit of my sainted mother was hovering over me, and that she would be my guardian angel in a far-off stranger's home.

I looked around the apartment for some little relic of my mother's, that I might treasure it as a sacred memento of her and my childhood's home, when far away.

A dress lay carefully folded within the little wardrobe. It was the last dress that my mother had worn in life. I would take that, and every time I looked upon it I should see my mother, I should feel her presence with me.*

Oh, how sacred it seemed to me then; no eyes but mine should look upon it, no stranger's hand should desecrate it; for, sacred as the pearl of great price, I would keep and preserve it. Then, after penning a little sonnet to my "Childhood's Home," I bade it a long and sad farewell. I will here repeat a few verses, and then proceed with my story.

ADIEU, MY CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

Adieu, my childhood's home, adieu!

My grotto, streamlet, dell,

My parting tribute is to you,

A tear and sad farewell.

Beneath thy shades I've wandered free,

Nor care, nor sorrow knew,

No longer bloom thy joys for me —

My childhood's home, adieu!

* That dress is mine still.

Adieu each towering, misty height,
By our familiar bowers —
My mountain streams arrayed in light,
Where laves the sunlit flowers.
How oft thy undulating notes,
Low murmuring to the sea,
Entranced, with witching power, my thoughts
In dreams of ecstasy.

Though other scenes call me away,
No joys my bosom fill ;
For memory, with her chast'ning ray,
Will twine around me still.
While soft o'er each endearing scene,
Hope spreads her magic wand ;
Dispelling clouds that darkly seem
To veil my native land.

My childhood's home, to me how fair,
Beneath thy wildwood shade,
Where with a parent's shielding care
And joyous heart I strayed ;
Thy skies reflect a deeper blue,
When mirrored in the tide,
And brighter glows the sunset hue
That tints the even-tide.

When twilight o'er the azure sky
Her soft enchantments throw,
And summer zephyrs passing by
Where strains all gently flow,
Like lute-strings swept by fairie's hand
Far o'er the clear blue sea ;
Thus o'er me steals my native land,
Sweet memories of thee.

If e'er from dreary wanderings
I reach my childhood's home,
Then naught from my own mountain streams
Shall tempt my feet to roam ;
I leave thee with a kind farewell,
While tears mine eyes bedew,
And fond emotions inly swell,
My childhood's home, adieu !

You must remember that I was young, and little used to verse-making ; but it was the heart's tributary farewell, and as such I present it to you.



CHAPTER VI.

MY JOURNEY TO LOWELL. — THE ARRIVAL. — FIRST IMPRESSIONS.
— FIRST INTRODUCTION INTO THE BOARDING-HOUSE AND COTTON MILL.

THREE DREARY days — dreary because the sun had hid his smiles and radiance behind the murky clouds, while the heavy fogs and chilling mists enveloped us like the gloomy folds of a sable pall — we were tossed and jostled in an old lumbering stage-coach, which was then the only public conveyance from the home of our nativity to the nearest railroad station, on our way to the Spindle City.

Weary and worn, we arrived there just as the setting sun was gilding the tops of the tall steeples which met our longing visions so cheerfully in the distance.

We crossed the bridge which spanned the majestic Merrimac, and was soon set down amidst a cluster of long brick blocks, termed by our initiated companions, “Factory Boarding-houses.”

Then came another trial. There were several of us, “green hands,” who had never seen the inside nor the outside of a cotton mill. We could not all find employment in one room or mill; nor even could we all be provided for within the several mills of one corporation.

• So it fell to my lot to be the stray lamb again; and, after a weary and discouraging search, a vacancy was discovered in a weaving room, on the H—— Corporation, about a mile distant from where my companions had been located.

A boarding-house was the next consideration; but there was no choice in selection. Wherever there was a vacancy or spare corner in a bed, there I must locate.

At last one vacancy was discovered, the only vacancy on the corporation; for it was the season of gathering in, from hamlet and cot, of youths and maidens desirous of securing a permanent location through the approaching winter.

Well, my little trunk found an obscure corner in the "upper front" of No. 5, and I a small space in the narrow bed appropriated to me and a fat, blousy maiden from the old Granite State, who was troubled exceedingly with scrofula and salt rheum; so much so, that I often found it necessary to lay my weary, aching head upon the hard beam, in preference to the pillow which was intended for both our use.

Beneath us was a trundle-bed where an old grandma and her foster child found repose. And to the left, another bed in close proximity, occupied by two spinster sisters, who had, years ago, "been through the mill," and could tell us wondrous tales of "reductions," and "turnouts," and "stump speeches," and "serenades," and "dona-

tions," and "clerical sympathy," and "legal interference," winding up with a grand stampede back to the loom and spinning-frame, with acknowledgments and promises again to walk worthy of the vocation to which they had been called.

Such were my sleeping-room companions of that factory boarding-house.

By dint of much consideration and skilful manœuvring, a seat was provided for me upon a low bench by the side of one of the long tables extending through the dining-hall, where I was seated in a most unceremonious manner between a brawny lassie from the Emerald Isle and a Green Mountain boy, who kept up a continual animosity and sharpshooting of bombshells, in the shape of potato-parings and apple-sauce, taking me, without leave or license, for their wall of defence in the hottest of their hostile affray.

In the mean time, while I managed as best I could, by dint of dodging and crouching, to escape the flying missiles, my opposite neighbors had taken upon themselves the responsibility of annihilating the meat, vegetables, and staff of life, sending them all together to oblivion; for no traces of them were left to the longing vision of a hungry soul.

"Every man for himself, Miss, in a factory boarding-house," said a gray-haired man, on witnessing my astonishment at the rapidly disappearing edibles. "We should starve on complimentary gentility. There is a

slice for each, and a slice for all ; but woe to him who tarrieth by the way ; for there are no loaves and fishes, nor the fragments thereof, to be gathered up after the cravings of the multitude have been appeased."

In the morning we were hurried from our restless slumbers by the loud booming of the bells to the breakfast table. But the sour bread, rancid butter, and the unpalatable substitute for coffee, sweetened with the sugar of molasses' casks, gave me such a sickening sensation, that I turned away with disgust from the sight and steam of such unpalatable preparations.

I wept, as I turned with loathing from the untasted food, and my thoughts reverted to the past, when my mother's little hands had prepared the sweet corn-cakes, fresh butter, and bowl of rich warm milk for our morning's repast.

"All the boarding-houses are not like this," said a young girl from my own native State, who had been a witness of my tears and loathings and untasted food for several previous mornings. "I have engaged the first vacancy at No. 10. Two of the boarders are already on their notice, and if you wish to accompany me, I will make an engagement for you to-day. There you will find clean dishes, nice warm biscuits, and butter and coffee that even your delicate taste will not turn from with disgust."

I eagerly assented to the arrangement, and with the hope of better days in prospective, met more cheerfully

the disgusting privations which attended me in that uncongenial and comfortless abiding-place.

I found that factory life was not all a pleasant pastime. The whirl and bustle, the din and clatter of machinery, wrought harshly upon my sensitive nerves, causing excruciating headaches, sickening sensations, and longings for the peaceful quietude and retirements of my dear native home. Alas! for the lone wanderer, it would never be home again.

A few weeks of preparatory instructions from an experienced weaver, and then I was placed in charge of a pair of looms, beside a girl as young and inexperienced as myself.

She had the misfortune of a handsome face, and spent much of her time before the little glass which hung upon the opposite wall. Her work was neglected, and oft the threadless shuttle would bound with fearful velocity into the warp which I had just managed, with the assistance of an older hand, to coax into tolerable running order, and before I could prevent the mischief, her shuttle and mine, like fearful opponents, were cutting down and making waste of the threads and fabric I had so wearily and hopefully attended.

Then, when all was in running order again, a fearful whiz and stunning blow from its neglected and threadless mate, would send me reeling and fainting to my seat, with a fearful contusion upon my brow or temples, bursting with pain and indignation at the neglect which

had wrought upon me so much trouble and toil. In every way, I seemed in momentary peril of my limbs or life. If I sought refuge from the flying shuttles on the other side, then the swift revolving of the whizzing clogs and heavy belts would draw, like the treacherous whirlpool, my garments into their fearful embrace. Or the belts would break loose from the heavy drums, and, like the fiery fangs of the flying dragon, clutch me fearfully in their angry grasp.

After a while things assumed a more cheering aspect. The handsome girl, who was only a "spare hand," resigned her place to the rightful owner, a quiet, intelligent girl, who had been on a visit to her friends and home in a neighboring State.

I had become more accustomed to the whiz and whirl of the machinery, and had learned the art not only of keeping my threads and spirits up, but of dodging a flying shuttle, and the treacherous fangs of the sweeping dragon.

I left my "bed and board" at No. 5, and refused longer to remain a target for the Green Mountain boy and his Irish lassie.

No. 10 was a home for young ladies,—intelligent and church-going young ladies. The dishes were clean, meats palatable, the beds and rooms kept in perfect order, and every thing as quiet and domesticated as a pious maiden lady could wish or devise.

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS FROM HOME. — MATTA'S MARRIAGE. — SUDDEN DEATH
OF OUR FATHER. — MY TREASURE. — A BROTHER'S GRAVE.

A YEAR PASSED away, and I was beginning to feel at home and happy, often receiving sisterly testimonials from Matta, Minnie, and Lula; and sometimes I would make them returns in the shape of a few dollars, nicely secured within the folds of my little note.

One day two letters came to my address. One was from dear, dear brother, written in a cheerful, hopeful, encouraging tone, characteristic of his noble, ardent, and sanguine nature; telling me how rapidly he was progressing in his studies, under the tuition of his kind instructors and benefactors; pointing me hopefully forward to the future, when the little scattered flock would once more nestle lovingly together within the same fold, never again to be driven out by the grim, meagre tyrant, Want.

The other was from Matta; her's was written in a free, easy, hopeful tone, as they ever had been, informing me of her late marriage with a young mechanic.

“You will be surprised at this, Rosa,” she said, “knowing as you did of my previous engagement to Walter Seaton, who has just entered upon his profession of M. D. I have kept you in ignorance of all that has transpired in regard to us for the past year, fearing that it might give you unnecessary pain. But now it is all over, and the future, perhaps, will show us that it was all for the best.

“Walter, you know, belonged to a family which made some pretensions to aristocracy. His sister had married a man who lived in a fine house and kept an elegant carriage. She can assume the position of a lady of fashion, with servants at her command, to do her every bidding.

“When she had become acquainted with our distressed situation, and learned the fact that I, her brother’s intended, was a hireling, she forbade, upon the authority of an elder sister, all further intercourse between us, on pain of her everlasting displeasure.

“Walter was under some obligations to her for money remittances during his collegiate acquirements, and also had the promise of assistance in commencing his medical profession.

“He saw no alternative but acquiescence to her unreasonable demands ; and forthwith sought an interview with me, desiring me to release him from the vows we had previously and sacredly plighted.

“I would hold no unwilling captives,” I said. “If freedom from those sacred vows would make him honored and happy, then he should be free. But,” I added, “Retributions sometimes follow hard upon the heel of the inconstant and faithless. He who has registered our vows will judge between us.

“You remember Ada Morton, that cold, proud, contemptuous girl who spurned the very dust beneath her dainty feet. Well, in all Seclusivale, not one had even dared to bow before the regal throne of her forbidding haughtiness.

“Walter, or rather his wealthy sister, thought that she might be a fitting bride to bear his honored name; and so, after a few preliminary negotiations, they made immediate preparations for the nuptials, which were to be celebrated a day or two before his removal to P——, a section made vacant by the demise of a former occupant.

“The wedding, I understand, was a magnificent affair; for Madam R——, the sister of the groom, spared no pains or money to make it all her haughty vanity could desire.

“And I am married too, and shall soon be the mistress of an humble, though I trust a happy home.”

A hasty postscript was appended as follows:

“Dear Rosa, the painful intelligence has just reached me, since writing the above, of the sudden death of our father from a malignant fever.

“ Erst a stout, erect, and portly man, he had assumed the stoop and debility of age, and, therefore, became an easy victim to the fell destroyer, death.

“ When, oh when will death’s ravages cease amongst us? When will his fearful commission be withdrawn from our little band? When will the wail of anguish cease to go out from our bereaved and bleeding hearts? When will the pall-like gloom, which for years has overshadowed us, be cheered by the dawning of prosperity and hope?

“ Above these dark clouds may be the sunbeams which will dry up our tears and light with joy our future pathway.

“ Let us hope and trust in the orphan’s God, and claim his promises, which are sure as eternity, and unchanging as the Rock of Ages.”

Again I must drink of the wormwood and the gall, and quaff alone its bitterest dregs. Those who had mourned with me in former bereavements were far away. There were none to understand my grief or to sympathize with me in that time of bitter distress. Oh that I could fly away to that dear, deserted home, and tell my anguish to its silent walls with the tears and wailings of my orphaned and bleeding heart!

Oh that I could press my aching head and throbbing bosom, to some dear and familiar object of home, — the pillow where my mother died, the old arm-chair, or her well-worn Bible on the shelf!

Her dress! I grasped it eagerly from its secret hiding-place, and drenched it with the scalding tears which gushed up from my breaking heart.

My mother was with me; I felt her presence as visibly as when her gentle spirit was clothed with the mortal. How soothing her soft spirit-whisperings; how cheering the inspirations which enveloped me, like a halo of light from the golden gates and sapphire throne of the Immaculate.

Many times before, I had wept and prayed over that little memento, and I always felt that my mother was with me, soothing, comforting, and encouraging me through my lone, rough, shadowy pathway.

Worlds of wealth would not, could not purchase the garment which my mother laid aside for her burial robes and an angel's garb. I was no longer alone. Every day some sweet vision of the departed loved ones flitted before me with soft, soothing, encouraging whisperings; and, with renewed vigor and hope, I resumed my daily tasks, with the assurance that my mother's God would lead me safely through the rugged paths of life to her blessed abode in the happy spirit-world.

Several months passed away in a calm, quiet, monotonous way, for factory life is one continual round of sameness, year after year, save now and then a new comer, or a vacancy caused by the sickness, death, or absence of faces, with which our vision had been familiar for days and weeks and months before.

I had replenished my wardrobe, and accumulated quite a little sum, aside from the small remittances made now and then to Minnie and Lula.

The din and clatter of machinery was no longer an annoyance ; it destroyed the sound of uncongenial voices ; the coarse joke and vulgar song were lost in its familiar din ; and, undisturbed, I could commune with my own heart and the guardian spirits which ever attended me.

I relieved much of the dull monotony of factory life with books and pen. Many little sonnets I composed while bending busily over my daily task. One I will repeat to you here. It was a tribute to the brave and noble sailor boy, our brother Frank.

A BROTHER'S GRAVE.

He has gone to his rest, but 'tis not where the dark pine,
The willow and cypress a plaintive dirge sing ;
'Tis not where the wild rose, the sweet-brier and woodbine
Around him in silence their rich fragrance fling.

No cold sculptured marble is reared for his pillow,
No mound marks the spot where he silently sleeps ;
For he lies 'neath the dark foamy surf of the billow —
And naught but the sea-star a watch o'er him keeps.

The sea-nymph that rocks on the breast of the ocean,
A garland to memory will twine o'er the dead,
And cheer by her smiles the rude tempest's commotion,
While sweetly she sings o'er his wave-girdled bed.

Rest, peacefully rest, beneath thy loved ocean,
No more shall thy bark proudly ride o'er the wave ;
No more will thy breast beat with raptured emotion,
For it lies with the gem 'neath its pearl-crested cave.

When the purified throng shall have reached their bright haven,
With them may we join in the songs of the blest ;
Where no tear dims the eye, and no lone heart is riven —
Where the weary with God are forever at rest.



CHAPTER VIII.

OUR LAST BROTHER DIES IN NEW ORLEANS.—THE SACRILEGE IN
OUR CHILDHOOD'S HOME.—MINNIE'S MARRIAGE.—LULA WITH
ME IN LOWELL.

A FEW MONTHS more passed away, and then another letter came, with the astounding intelligence that our last, our only brother, had been called suddenly, in the bloom of youth and health, to meet his God and the friends who had gone before, to the mansions of rest in the city of His holiness.

He had gone, buoyant with health and youthful anticipations, with his friend and instructor, to spend the winter in the far South.

It was the sickly season. The fever was making fearful ravages throughout the city, sweeping down, like the plague and pestilence, the young and old, rich and poor, bond and free. And before they had been residents of New Orleans three days, my brother and his kind benefactor were filling a stranger's grave.

My heart died within me. I could not be comforted. And many and many a day I lay upon my bed almost insensible to every thing but the bereavements which

had shrouded my heart and desolated the home of my childhood.

Our dear, dear brother! how hopefully he had parted with us at the cottage door, where the old oak was nodding a kindly farewell to the young adventurer.

How cheeringly he wrote to us in his absence; pointing us forward to a future of pleasure and plenty, when he had become master of the profession for which he was so hopefully striving. Alas, for that future! no earth-greeting would ever behold it.

While we were struggling with the heavy bereavements which had so suddenly and fearfully stricken our young hearts, sacrilegious hands were making fearful ravages within the silent walls of our desolate home.

Every choice keepsake and available article was pilfered, one after another, from thence, till nothing remained for the weeping sisters, who were struggling with the bereaving rod and their relentless fate, in a stranger's home.

Our mother's Bible and chair were stealthily conveyed to one abode, while other articles of furniture were secreted here and there in other homes, till nothing remained to welcome us back but the silent walls and the old oak-tree swaying its branches mournfully above them.

Three years had passed away before I returned to my childhood's home, and then the house was gone too, and the old oak-tree. But the graves of some of the loved

ones were there, and the turf seemed too sacred for my feet to press.

With awe and reverence I bowed my head, and watered it with the tears which gushed out from a breaking heart.

Matta, soon after her marriage, had removed to a distance; and Minnie and Lula were too far away to know aught of what was passing in our little cot.

And so the sacrilegious hand was not stayed, till all had been pilfered by those stealthy ravagers.

“O God!” I cried, “all this injustice and outrage beneath that Holy Eye which cannot look upon sin with any degree of pleasure! All this beneath the scales of justice thine own strong hand poises above them and their wicked acts! All this within the precincts of civilization and the Holy Bible, which says, ‘Thou shalt not steal nor covet!’”

I knew that all those sinful acts had been registered by Him who judges the people in righteousness. And although His judgments are sometimes slow, yet they are sure; and are like the heavy mill-stone, grinding to powder the wicked transgressors.

Minnie had grown up a handsome, laughing girl, of a mild and pleasant disposition, graceful and attractive in deportment, and, while yet young, was married to a handsome youth, and removed many miles away from our native home.

Lula, our baby-pet, now a tall, graceful, intelligent girl, accompanied me to the Spindle City.

But the confinements of factory life, exposure from the heated rooms to the cold atmosphere and fierce storms of winter, wrought so fearfully upon her delicate constitution, that there was no alternative but to abandon her labors in that locality, and return to the more healthy and congenial pursuits of domestic country life.

She therefore bade me an affectionate adieu, and returned to Matta, who was the happy mother of a prattling girl, with the roses and sunshine of two laughing summers twined around her fair white brow, to whom she had given the name of our sainted mother, and also of a cherub baby boy, who bore the name of that loved brother who was filling a stranger's grave in a southern clime.

Time passed on, and then another letter came; and, within it, a delicate bridal card, and a tiny flaxen curl carefully secured to the well-filled sheet.

The card informed me that our little Lula had given her heart and hand to a young and enterprising mechanic, and was already mistress of a very pretty home, in the village of M——, with the best regards of her husband and self to sister Rosa, and a cordial invitation that she might soon be one of their happy group.

“You are lonely there, Rosa,” she continued, “and need the quiet repose and sympathy of our home and hearts, and also the pure, invigorating air of the healthful

country. Come to us. There is room in our home and hearts, and dear, dear Frank wants to see his sister Rosa."

That little flaxen ringlet! "O Matta! Matta! my heart bleeds for you. Has the death-angel indeed found his way to your happy home? Has he laid his cold icy hand upon the pure white brow and laughing lips of your first-born? Has he hushed the childish prattle and the soft pattering of tiny feet upon the cottage floor? Has he closed those lustrous eyes, so pure and saint-like in expression, and folded the slender, waxen fingers nervelessly upon the pulseless bosom? Has he pierced your heart anew, and given you yet another cup to quaff the gall of bitterness to the very dregs? Oh, stay! stay thy hand, thou mighty destroying conqueror! Let thy past desolations suffice thee, which thou hast wrought in the home of our childhood! And spare, oh spare the little remaining remnant from thy scourging rod."

Many a bitter tear I wept for that household pet. Many a heartfelt invocation I sent up to our God and her God, for that young and sorrowing mother, that her home, as ours had been, might not be darkened and desolated by that fell destroyer, death.

Soon after Lula's marriage I received an invitation to go to the South, or rather to the south-west. But to me

there seemed no place like a New England home, even though it was within the crowded walls of a factory boarding-house.

I therefore immediately penned a note to the one who had kindly tendered me the invitation, accompanied by the following lines, suggested by the above solicitation.

MY OWN NEW ENGLAND HOME.

Oh, tell me not of distant climes,
Where palms their broad leaves wave,
And where the weeping willow twines
Its branches o'er the waves ; —
Oh, tell me not of skies so fair,
And deeply shaded bowers,
And say not that the balmy air
Breathes o'er ambrosial flowers.

Oh, tell me not that crystal streams
Flow o'er their beds of pearl,
O'er placid lakes the moon's bright beams
Their witching charms unfurl.
I love New England's hills and dales,
Her foamy, broad blue sea ;
The rocky shores and fertile vales,
All, all have charms for me.

Our skies are bright and lovely too,
And health floats on the breeze ;
And gorgeous is the sunset hue,
O'er our transparent seas.

These craggy heights more beauteous are
 Than prairies broad can be ;
 New England still thy home is dear,
 Land of the brave and free.

Oh, lovely are these snow-capped hills
 And wild-wood shades to me ;
 There's music in the rippling rills,
 A charm is o'er the sea.
 No sable slave doth till thy soil,
 Sweet land of liberty ;
 No whip-lash wakes to daily toil,
 For all thy sons are free.

Land where the Indian's warwhoop rang,
 Land where their chieftains bled ;
 And where their vanquished warriors sang
 The wild dirge o'er their dead.
 Our fathers, in thy forests drear,
 Have fought and died for thee ;
 New England still thy home is dear,
 Land of the brave and free.

No more shall Paugus' darkening form
 Thy peaceful homes invade ;
 From Lovell's band a dauntless arm
 The chieftain low hath laid.
 He sleeps where Saco's waters flow,
 Beneath the tall pine-tree ;
 And warmer hearts for thee now glow,
 Land of the brave and free.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN TO THE SCENES OF MY CHILDHOOD.—LULA'S HOME.—
MATTA'S BEREAVEMENTS.—LULA'S LETTERS; HER FRANK IS
DYING.

ONE YEAR had sped by since Lula's marriage, and my lone heart yearned to greet her again, and visit once more the scenes of my early childhood, where the senseless form of my mother was silently mouldering.

And so one bright summer's morning I left the din and clatter of machinery, the noise and bustle of a factory boarding-house, and was soon out of sight of the tall spires which reared themselves so loftily above the busy Spindle City.

Lula met me with joyful acclamations and sisterly greetings at the door of her pretty home, and proudly placed within my arms an infant cherub boy,—her boy, the first-born of my baby sister.

It seemed but yesterday since we romped together, and, in our childish glee, chasing the shadows and the sunbeams beneath the swaying branches of the old oak-tree.

It seemed but yesterday since we had wept together

over the rigid features of a dying mother, and nestled closer together, a little motherless band, by the silent hearthstone of our desolate home.

And now she, the youngest of the fold, herself a proud, happy mother and wife, and mistress of a pretty and pleasant abode.

“I have named him Frank, Rosa. Is it not pretty? That is the name of my dear, dear husband, you know, and to me the sweetest name in all the world.”

I pressed him tenderly to my trembling lips, and bathed his fair young brow with the tears which welled up from my bursting heart. For dear to me as Lula herself, was her infant cherub boy.

I was pleased with her home, — with the neatness, regularity, and promptness with which every thing was accomplished in their due season.

We chatted of olden times, sang together the songs we used to love, rambled hand in hand through the green meadows, plucked the delicious berries which grew in tempting luxuriance at our feet, and had long drives together, over the hills and far away, in the little light vehicle which her Frank had manufactured with his own hands.”

And then we visited Matta together. Another birdling warbled its soft preludes in her dear home. It was a girl, too, like the first-born she had laid away beneath

the silent turf, where the form of our sainted mother was reposing.

“This little pledge of our earth-love I shall name for you, dear Rosa,” she said, as she laid it tenderly within my arms. “We love it very, very much; and more, because we fear that the death-angel will wrest it from us as he did our first-born darling babe.”

Then little Ernest, who bore the name of our dead brother, came shyly to my side, and laid his little dimpled hand coaxingly within my own.

In the first glad joy of sisterly greeting, he had been overlooked; but now he raised his little winsome face to mine, around which the long flaxen curls were streaming in sunny beauty, while the little plump lips half pouting, half laughing, were temptingly held up for “aunty’s kiss.”

I pressed his dimpled cheeks and flaxen curls wildly to my throbbing bosom, accompanied with such a shower of stifling kisses, that he was glad to beat a retreat, and screen himself within the folds of his mother’s dressing-gown.

A few weeks were spent with Matta and her babes, and then we hied us away to Minnie’s abode in the city of P——.

Minnie had no babes to claim our share of attention; but she was a light, joyous, happy creature, making sunshine and gladness wherever she went,

with her bright smiling face and free gushing laughter.

And so in Minnie's home the days sped on with electric velocity, till the cold, bleak winds of autumn swept threateningly from the distant mountains, warning me of the near approach of winter, and the necessity of resuming my labors in my factory home.

And, back again, the weeks and months sped on in the same monotonous way as formerly. The same kindly greetings and familiar faces met me as erst, passing to and fro.

In the same little screen, stood my plants and flowers, and just above them hung the little mirror, where I had so often smoothed my hair and laved my heated brow with the cooling draught.

The same shining shuttles were flying as merrily as ever through the forest of snowy threads, always escaping with wonderful tenacity the threatening thump, thump, thump of the heavy lathe.

The whirl and whiz of belts and clogs, all seemed like the greetings of cherished friends. I wrote and sang and chatted, fearless of listening critics, and my daily invocations to Heaven's throne were heard only by the great Father, as they arose from my lips, while bending busily over my daily task.

It was midwinter, and the wail of anguish again reached me from Mattie's far-off home. Little Ernest

had fallen a victim to a fatal disease, and was already clothed in a seraph's shining garb, roaming with his sainted sister over the fields ambrosial in the happy spirit-world.

Mattie's home was again darkened, and her heart crushed by the bereaving rod. Where could she fly for consolation?

Earth had no balm for those bleeding wounds. Many a day I wept over the fate of poor little Ernest, and mourned for the bereaved mother, till the spirit-whisperings answered, "It is well with the child."

The dark, fearful shadow of the death-angel was already nearing the threshold of Lula's happy home. That fell destroyer, consumption, was clutching his fatal fangs into the heart-depths of her young and idol husband. Yet he came so stealthily, so treacherously, that they knew not an enemy was stalking around their dwelling, till they heard the ominous clanking of his iron heel, and the dark shadow of his gaunt form fell threateningly upon their hearts and home.

Then a letter reached me from Lula's home, saying entreatingly, "Do come to me, Rosa; my heart is breaking. I cannot bear this great affliction alone. Come to me, for the hand of God is laid heavily upon me."

"Why, oh why must it ever be thus, that our heart's cherished ones, our idols, must ever be wrested from us, when we cling to them with such idolatrous devotion?"

“I cannot part with dear, dear Frank; he is my world, my light, my life, my heaven below. And little Frank is just beginning to climb upon his knees, and lisp his name so prettily too. Oh, our home has been a little paradise. Must it be shrouded in the gloom of death and the tomb?”

I made immediate preparations to go to Lula; hoping and praying that the angel of death might pass them by; that he would stay his hand, ere the light of their happy home had forever departed from her. They had been so happy together. I could not think he was dying.



CHAPTER X.

DEATH OF LULA'S CHERUB BOY.—HER HUSBAND'S TRIUMPHANT
DEATH.—HER HOME MADE DESOLATE.

IN A FEW DAYS I stood upon the threshold of my sister's dwelling. No joyful acclamations reached my ear, as I cautiously raised the latch to gain admittance to the room where we last parted one little year ago,—she a happy wife and mother, with the roses and sunshine of youth and health upon her fair white brow,—little dreaming that the sunlight would so soon be darkened by the heavy clouds of sorrow, or that the roses would fade and wither beneath the cypress-wreath and badges of bereavement and death.

I entered. No one saw my approach, for a mightier than I had preceded me; and they were bowing in hushed awe and speechless silence before the dark sceptre he wielded commandingly before them.

He was no stranger to me. Many times I had seen him enter the little cot which erst nestled so lovingly beneath the old oak-tree. Many times that dark sceptre had severed a link from out our happy band, and driven the dancing sunlight from our hearts and home. And he was the same, the very same in that little darkened

room, where Lula was kneeling in hopeless grief beside the couch of her only, her idol boy.

How sweet he looked, as he lay there in the still repose of death; his soft white lids drooping over the marble cheek; his waxen fingers clasped lovingly over a pulseless breast; his innocent prattlings all hushed by the cold, icy fingers of death; and his delicate limbs shrouded in the habiliments of the tomb.

How the pent-up fountains of that mother's heart gushed forth in unrepressed and uncontrollable grief, as she knelt there with her cold white hand pressing convulsively its pulseless brow.

Grief and despair were throwing around her their dark, impenetrable shroud. She saw her child torn away from her yearning heart and shielding bosom, and the dark and silent tomb yawning to receive it.

Neighbors and friends were gathered around her with tears of sympathy and words of condolence; but she refused to be comforted.

Oh that our angel-mother could fold her wings around her stricken child, and, in a still small voice, breathe words of sweet consolation into her troubled ear as oft she had to mine.

I felt that that angel-mother was already hovering around us; and I prayed that her soft, soothing inspirations might calm the deep anguish, the crushing agony, of Lula's bleeding heart.

Oh that hope might gleam to her through the dim,

dark distance. That with an eye of faith she might penetrate the dark clouds of despair; and, far beyond, see the ethereal form of our sainted mother clothed in a garb of dazzling beauty, bearing, within her snowy pinions, her infant babe safely within the golden gates of the New Jerusalem, to repose in her sainted bosom free from the sins, the sorrows, and sufferings of this lower earth.

“Lula,” I whispered, as I twined my arm caressingly around her neck, “be firm in the strength of Abraham’s God; for it is well with the child.”

Lula laid her head upon my throbbing bosom, and sobbed aloud. “O Rosa! my heart is breaking for my darling babe.”

How many a mother has knelt and wept as despairingly as Lula did, over the pale features of a darling, an only babe, made lifeless by that fearful scourge, the scarlet fever.

How many families have been swept away by its devastating power. How many villages have been desolated by its sweeping breath and fiery fangs.

Well may a mother tremble, and press more closely to her bosom her darling babes, when she hears the sound of his chariot wheels in the far-off distance.

He is a mighty conqueror; his shafts are swift and fatal to the sweet heart-blossoms a mother’s love has nourished with the tenderest care and fondest solicitude. They bore her household pet to the little vault which was

opened to receive him. And then Lula returned, with a breaking heart, to perform her mission of love beside the couch of her invalid husband.

How softly and shadow-like she moved around the darkened apartment, lest her slightest foot-fall might arouse him from a momentary forgetfulness of his torturing disease.

How tenderly her soft hand laved his burning brow, or held the cooling beverage to his parched and fevered lips.

How carefully she adjusted the downy pillows so that he might recline in a position of greater ease and repose.

And through the dark and stilly night hours she hovered around the couch of the restless sufferer, performing, ever and anon, some act of love; never herself indulging in needful repose while her services were required at his side, or her hand could alleviate one pain, or perform one more act of tenderness to the suffering one.

But her tenderest care could not restore him, her love could not detain him, her tears and prayers could not soften the mandates of the death-king, who strode threateningly around their dwelling, and rapped impatiently at the door of their little bridal chamber.

“O my husband, you must not, you will not, leave me here alone! You cannot die while my heart beats so fondly for you. My love must detain you. The death-

king must not enter our little home again, and wrest you from my bleeding bosom."

"Jesus calls me, dear Lula. I fear not the death-king; for an angel-band will bear me safely to the mansion he has prepared for me in the spirit-world. I shall only change the mortal for the immortal; only exchange weakness for strength; sorrow and pain for the glories of heaven. I shall not be far from you, Lula. I will watch over you, comfort and counsel you, till we mingle our notes of praise, with myriad angel voices, to God and the Lamb in the happy spirit-world. Be comforted, Lula, you will meet me there soon, never, no never to part again."

And thus he passed away from earth, and Lula, widowed and childless, bowed meekly to the bereaving rod. But the shaft went home to the heart's core, and no earth-balm could heal the wound it made. How desolate was her heart when she returned from the graves of her idols to her cheerless home. Alas! for Lula it was home no longer.

Her tears had not been stayed; her heart-moanings were not hushed, ere the relatives, who had long coveted the little wealth which her husband had accumulated by persevering industry, took measures to secure it to themselves; and even to wrest from her the widow's mite, lawfully hers, by false representations and stealthy conveyances of valuable articles from the manufacturing establishment of her departed husband..

And so Lula once more was penniless, homeless, and alone, with crushed spirits, a bleeding heart, and enfeebled constitution. To Matta's home then she fled, till health and strength should once more enable her to wrestle with the heavy billows of adversity which were surging so heavily and surely against the little bark, that lay wrecked and disabled upon the bleak, barren rocks of her stormy life-sea.

Minnie had removed far away. Many months her delicate constitution had been yielding slowly, but surely, to that fell-destroyer of youth and beauty, consumption.

One day a letter came to us. It was in a stranger's hand, but the fearful forebodings of our hearts told us too truly what it contained.

Minnie, too, was dead. Her free, gushing joyousness was hushed, and the sunshine of her happy smiles had gone out from her pleasant home.

We mourned for our gentle Minnie, as we had mourned for those who had gone before ; and wept that she, too, must fill a stranger's grave, far, far away from the scenes and associations of our happy childhood.

Three of us then was all that remained of that once numerous family ; and which, we knew not, would be the next victim to that fell and relentless destroyer.

We felt that his cravings would not be appeased, till he had sucked the last life-drop from the hearts he had yet spared in the shattered remnant of that hapless family.

CHAPTER XI.

I RETURN TO THE SPINDLE CITY. — CHANGES IN NUMBER TEN. —
A PLEASANT COMPANION. — LITTLE WEEPING WILLOW.

ONCE MORE I returned to the Spindle City ; and as my foot again pressed the threshold of that old familiar home, No. 10, a prayer went up with heartfelt thankfulness to the orphan's God, that there was yet this asylum left to shelter the lone wanderer and heart-stricken orphan.

Many times it had changed occupants since I had sought its quiet, protecting roof. Kindly hearts and familiar faces had often departed, with a tearful farewell, from those pleasant associations, again to gladden the homes of their childhood, or to diffuse the light of love and devotion in the homes and hearts of those they had chosen, for weal or woe, through the journey of shadows and sunbeams in life's pilgrimage.

Such changes had taken place in my recent absence, and in my pleasant sleeping apartment, none but strange faces awaited to greet my return.

So Miss Gourdon, my old friend and mistress of the house informed me, after her kindly greetings and motherly congratulations on my safe return.

“They have already procured places, and are already quite factoryfied, with the exception of the little pale, drooping Effie Lee. The girls call her the ‘Weeping Willow.’ She has been here but a few days, and hardly made an effort to procure employment. She seems very sensitive and friendless; and I am so glad that you have come, for I know that your sympathies will be enlisted in her favor, as also your influence in behalf of her welfare.”

I quickly followed the coachman with my luggage, and bade him leave it in the hall, outside the door of my sleeping apartment. My heart was gushing with sympathy for the lone one. But when I entered that old, familiar apartment, and my eyes rested upon the drooping form of the unknown, my sympathies found vent in a gush of unsuppressed tears.

She sat at my own little writing-table; her head bowed low, her face leaning upon her clasped hands, concealed by a heavy fall of bright golden tresses, resembling a cloud of sunlight resting upon a lily bed, surrounded by the sable drapery of the storm-cloud.

She did not raise her head, and I knew by the half-suppressed sob and the heavy throbbing of the bosom, beneath the folds of the sable dress, that she was weeping. Aye, weeping tears of bitter and hopeless bereavement.

Instinctively I was drawn to her side, and laying my

hand caressingly upon the soft curls which shaded her throbbing temples, I whispered tenderly, "A little homesick, my dear, I think; but it will soon pass away, and you will even learn to love the scenes and associations which at first seem so uncongenial and repulsive to a delicate and sensitive nature.

"It is what I call the orphan's home; a resort for the poor and friendless. I hail it with gratitude to the great Father, who is also the orphan's God, that He has endowed men with the means, ability, and disposition, to erect such institutions of industry, where any and all may acquire a competence, independent and free from the degradation which charitable obligation demands.

"Miss Gourdon has told me that you are a stranger here, without even an acquaintance to give you the warm hand of friendship, or a kindly word of encouragement, in this eventful era of your young life, which has elicited my warm sympathies in your behalf, as it shall my influence, in procuring for you the situation which you desire."

She raised her head, and pressed convulsively my cool palm to her burning brow. "Oh!" she articulated, "I am alone, alone in the wide world. Not one remains to whom my heart can claim kindred. All, all are gone, and this heart, this life, is — oh — so desolate!

"Why, oh why was I left to tread this dark, thorny life-path alone — alone?"

“Nay, not alone,” I said, “for they are all with thee still, that household band; and God, even the great Jehovah, holds thee by the right hand of His power and mercy.”

The welcome sound of the tea-bell rang merrily through the hall, and hastily wiping the tear-drops from the swollen cheeks of my little protege, I drew her arm affectionately within my own, and hastened to my old, familiar seat in the dining-hall below.

Miss Gourdon smiled a kindly greeting as we entered, and introduced me as the Rosa Lynd she had been expecting to occupy the bed and room which had formerly been appropriated to my use.

“I did not wait for your permission, Rosa,” she said, “in the selection of your lodging companion, for I felt that you would be just the ones of all the world,—the very best friends imaginable.

“And I hardly know which to congratulate the most; you Rosa, for having found one on whom you can lavish the love and sympathy of your warm heart, or the shrinking, sensitive, tearful Effie, who can lean upon your kindly arm, and grow strong, and hopeful, and happy, ’neath your encouraging smiles and sisterly affection.”

“Congratulate me, Mother Gourdon, for having found one who will suffer me to act in the double capacity of friend and sister.

“ Yes, we will be sisters, Effie dear, as well as friends and room-mates. For how truly can our hearts sympathize with each other in the sorrows and bereavements which have desolated our homes, and twined our brows with the cypress wreath of lonely orphanage.”

Effie’s large blue eyes glistened with hopeful tears, as they beamed with a look of gratitude upon me.

Her fair, white, transparent brow grew placid and serene, a delicate tinge suffused her cheek, while a faint smile played alternately around the dimples of her pretty mouth.

After answering the many questions of Mother Gourdon, in relation to the sorrowful events which had transpired in my absence, of Lula’s bereavements and her desolate home, we repaired again to the cosy little room appropriated to our use.

Very little etiquette or formality is served up amongst factory girls, whether they compose the same household circle, or mingle with the mass in the factory yard. Wherever they meet, reserve and shyness give place to pleasant greetings and sisterly familiarity. And taking advantage of this privilege, I said, “ It will be one whole hour before bell time yet, Effie ; and, with your permission, we will spend it in making ourselves a little better acquainted with each other, by relating some of the incidents of our sad, eventful lives.

“ And so you must gratify my curiosity first,” I con-

tinued in a cheerful tone, twining my arm affectionately around her snowy neck, as I seated myself by her side, “by telling me how such a little, sensitive, shrinking creature as you seem to be, ever found the way from the Pine-tree State to our busy Spindle City.”

Effie smiled mournfully, while the tears started afresh to her clear blue eyes. In a moment she mastered her emotions, and said, “Oh, it is a sad, sad story ; but I feel that it will be a relief to unburden my heart to one who can, from experience, sympathize with my loneliness and orphanage.”



CHAPTER XII.

EFFIE LEE'S GLOWING DESCRIPTION OF HER CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

— ESQUIRE STONEHEART'S PAUPERS.

“MY FATHER was once an enterprising mechanic, and being a superior workman, soon accumulated a handsome little fortune which seemed the sure precursor to wealth and an elevated position in the ranks of the world. It is an old saying, and I believe a true one, that misfortunes never come single-handed. Nevertheless, it proved true in relation to my father and his little competence.

“A fire occurred which proved very disastrous in the village where he was located, and with one fell swoop it took all that my father possessed, with the exception of the lives of his darling ones.

“When my father became fully sensible of the ruin and desolation which had befallen him, and saw the morning sunlight smiling mockingly upon the thick smoke and charred timbers of the elegant home his own industry had reared, it completely unmanned him.

“Many weeks he lay bereft of strength and reason, and when at last they returned to him, they brought not

back his former hopeful aspirations and energetic will, which had characterized him in his previous efforts. He was physically and mentally shattered by the sad catastrophe which had beggared him.

“Yes, my father was penniless, and their only means of support through his long and tedious illness was provided by public charity.

“One evening, just as my father had begun to venture out a little, assisted by my mother, they were surprised by the entrance and introduction of a tall, coarse-featured, hard-fisted man, whom my father at once recognized as one of the officials of his native town.

“My father recoiled with horror at the sight of him, for a presentiment that he had not yet drank off the dregs of the bitter cup, rushed over him with irresistible and overpowering force. With a groan, which wells up only from a broken and bleeding heart, he sank back fainting upon the throbbing bosom of my gentle mother.

“‘Is this the reception I meet with, hey, boy?’ said the official with an insulting leer, ‘when I come to help you out of your troubles? Come, I am going to take you back to B——; I knew you could not get along without us. The fact is we have had a town meeting, and Esquire Stoncheart has consented to take you.

“‘He said that he would take you at the lowest possible price, and he has made a bargain this time, I swow, and is in a deuced hurry to have the pay-roll in black and white upon his logbook and ledger.’

“And he fastened his small, snaky eyes, with an insulting, licentious glare upon my sensitive mother, who recoiled with horror from his rude gaze.

“‘Come, Lee,’ he continued, ‘bestir yourself, you’ll find that you have got precious little time to waste in conniptions; for I shall start with you to-morrow morning, whether you will or no, and place you under good protection for a while or so, I reckon.’

“The full force of his assertions came like the scathing lightning to those heart-stricken and desolate ones. And words have no power to express the anguish which those assertions conveyed to their hearts.

“They were paupers, and had been knocked down under the hammer of the auctioneer, like cast-off clothing or more worthless refuse.

“‘Is there no way of escape, dear George? — no alternative?’ asked my mother, as the door closed upon the tall, gaunt form of him who had come to deal this last and heavy blow.

“‘Alas! none, I fear, my precious wife. You know that I for many years have been an orphan, left to hew my way alone through the rough sandstones of life; and your father is dead also, and the portion which he left you is devoured by the greedy flames.

“‘Whither shall we go? to what turn for comfort or assistance, but to Him who doeth all things well? Let us trust Him, my gentle wife, and may-be we shall find him all-sufficient.

“ ‘We must go with this man ; I see no alternative.’ It will, I fear, be long before I recover my health sufficiently to do aught for the comfort or well-being of my family ; and you, dearest, will soon need the most delicate attentions, which a sick and beggared husband cannot tender you.’

“ ‘Talk not of me, dear George ; for whither thou goest, I will go,’ said my mother. ‘I will never repine, though fate deals harshly with us, if so be that we are not separated by misfortune, or the stern, relentless hand of death.’

“ ‘Yes ; I will go, hoping that you will soon recover your health ; and then, with our united efforts, we shall soon be able to raise ourselves from this mortifying degradation.’

“ ‘Let us, with microscopic faith, penetrate these dark clouds which hang so ominously around us, and look trustingly and hopefully into the future.’

“ ‘We will not always be thus. The hill is before us ; we must either remain inactive at the base, or go up. The ascension will be easier, when we make it hand in hand together, dearest.’

“ ‘You have yet to learn the energy, courage, and perseverance of your wee-pet wife. I already feel myself a David — nay, more ; were fifty giants in the way to impede my progress, I could slay them all, and lay them lifeless at my feet.’

“ ‘Courage, George ; though the waters are dark and

"turbid through which we must pass, I know there are green fields beyond, and flowers and sunshine, and, over all, a calm, cloudless sky.

" 'I fear not now to beat back and struggle with the dark waves of this turbid stream; we shall soon be beyond it, and so happy.'

"The morning dawned, and they were hurried from their couch, where they had spent a sleepless night of intense anxiety and bitter anguish, and bidden to make their preparations as brief as possible, as the magistrate was in haste to proceed on his journey.

"Neither my father or mother tasted aught of the food which had been prepared; and they even turned from it with loathing and disgust.

" 'Never mind,' said the dignitary. 'A day or two of hard riding, through this sharp November air, will whet their dainty teeth, I'll warrant me.'

" 'Never mind the breakfast. They will come around all right, when they get accustomed to Esquire Stoneheart's luxuries. Pooh! what right have paupers to luxuries?'

" 'The fact is, we have too many of them to grant them many indulgences. Ha! ha! It would take all the funds of Uncle Sam's treasury to buy luxuries for such a host of lazy gormandizers. This way to my conveyance, gentlefolk,' he said mockingly, as he led the way to the back door.

" 'It may be it is not quite so nice as the one you

used to ride in, and which, unfortunately, was amongst the missing on the night of that dreadful fire ; but it is such as the good fathers of B—— furnish, when they send abroad to recall their prodigal children to the home which their bounty provides.

“ ‘The fact is, Miss,’ he continued, as he placed my mother upon the rough, hard seat, beside her exhausted and fainting husband ; ‘the fact is, Miss, we live too fast in these degenerate times. We build houses and barns, and add to them greater magnificence than that of Solomon’s temple. And then we say we will make unto ourselves a golden idol, that we may worship it, forgetting that there is a jealous God, who, in his anger, can send the scathing fire, and who makes your idols and wealth disappear like chaff before the whirlwind.

“ ‘There, now, we are all right, eh ?’ he continued, as he tucked the scanty corners of the rough blanket around the shivering form of the invalid.

“ ‘A very good day to you, Madam,’ he said, raising his whip, and giving a sly nod and wink to the hostess, which she well knew how to understand. ‘Take very good care of the children, and don’t let them run away before I make another trip east’ard, because I shall be responsible for all the missing ones, you know.

“ ‘The fact is, Miss Lee, I didn’t come prepared to take a whole township ; and so I must wait for another cargo and further orders.’

““Oh, here! John! Nelly! Stop, sir! You are not going to leave my children here alone, unprotected and beggared, while you tear us helplessly and hopelessly away from them?” said my mother, pleadingly.

““John! Nelly!” she cried again, with heart-rending anguish, as, with a wild, hysterical bound, she made a desperate effort to leap from the carriage.

“But the functionary anticipated her frenzied designs, and sprang upon the back of the sleigh behind her, at the same time throwing his long, sinewy limbs on either side of her delicate neck, till his large shapeless feet, encased in heavy cowhide boots, fell like leaden weights upon her lap.

“And in this indelicate, inhuman, and vise-like position he held her, lashing his horse to the utmost of his speed, till the cries of the children, who had run screeching imploringly to be taken with their parents, had died away behind the receding hill-tops, and the frenzied convulsions of the distracted mother had given place to a swoon of death-like insensibility, from which, happy would it have been for her, had she never recovered.

“The sufferings of my mother were indescribable, both physically and mentally, through that tedious journey, by the disgusting position in which she was compelled to remain in the hours of her unhappy consciousness, and the inexpressible agony which she suffered by being torn, with such inhuman voracity, from the helpless lambs of her little flock.

CHAPTER XIII.

EFFIE'S PARENTS COMMENCE THE PRIVATIONS OF PAUPERISM
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF ALEXANDER STONEHEART, ESQ.—AN
UNEXPECTED FRIEND.

“‘G E O R G E,’ she whispered, when at nightfall she laid her head despairingly upon his almost pulseless bosom, ‘George, is there a God? one who says, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay?” Tell me, dearest, is it so? or am I—am I mad, frenzied, or dreaming? O George! have we passed through so much, and survived it, while a just and holy God has been looking calmly down upon the scene of wrong and anguish?’

“‘Hush, Effie, dear; God’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear.

“‘Our wrongs and sufferings are all written down in His unerring Book, and in a way that we know not of, He will avenge them, and carry us safely through the almost overwhelming tide of this dark, turbid stream, to the green fields and smiling sunlight beyond.

“‘Effie, where is your courage of a night ago? How many giants have you left lifeless on the battlefield?

“‘Come, wifey dear,’ continued my father, ‘cheer up, for you know that we must encourage each other, or our children will be left unloved orphans in their helpless infancy.’

“‘But, husband,’ said my mother, ‘they are already wrested from us by a hand more cruel and relentless than that of death.’

“‘Only for a while is this separation from us. I am going where I am known; and if I can only recover a little, I shall soon find my way to some kind, sympathetic heart. And I shall institute a complaint against the tyrannical treatment of to-day, if I live, and God will help the right, wifey mine.’

“‘George!’ She could say no more; for her head nestled closer to his bosom, and her heart found relief in a gush of friendly, soothing tears — the first that had cooled the hot lava of her burning brain since the cruel separation from her tender babes.

“A sweet sleep stole over them, like the soft whisperings of angels. And when the harsh voice of that tyrannical official aroused them at early dawn, it seemed like drawing them away from the enchanting strains of a seraph’s lyre, to the rack and torture of some hated inquisition.

“Oh, that night of peaceful repose! never again forgotten through the years which sped by in their after-life of shadows and sunlight. That day they ar-

rived at their destination, and commenced the pauper's fare under the auspices of Alexander Stoneheart, Esq.

"He had his warm parlors, his soft carpets, his easy chairs, and comfortable lounges; and upon his table were savory meats, tempting viands, delicious and invigorating cordials; fruits, foreign and domestic, which would have been so grateful to the tardy convalescence of my father, or the varying cravings of my mother, in her delicate situation.

"But no: 'What business have paupers with luxuries?' said the pompous Esquire.

"A pine table in the uncarpeted kitchen, a corn-cake, fried pork and potatoes, with now and then the delicious addition of salt-fish and weak tea or coffee, made from remnants which had been removed from his table, — was good enough for a pauper's fare. And as for easy chairs for the sick ones — 'Oh, the very idea was presumptuous. Who ever heard of such a thing?'

"But Esquire Stoneheart did consider the delicate health of my parents, at least he thought so, enough to grant them the indulgence of a sleeping apartment over the cooking-room. 'It was large enough for all the family,' so he said, 'and warm enough too, for the chimney ran directly through the centre of the room, warmed by the heat below. The roaches might be a little thick there, but ——'

"'La!' said the fascinating Miss Stoneheart, 'poor

folks are accustomed to such things. And paupers will never mind roaches in Esquire Stoneheart's mansion.'

" 'Some paupers would not, my dear Angelica,' answered Mrs. Stoneheart, complacently; 'but you know the Lees have been accustomed to a different style of living, — so genteel and high-minded withal, that I fear we shall find some trouble in bringing them down to a pauper's fare.'

" 'Leave that to me, mother, and I will soon make them know their places, as easily as Brown and Brindle and Broad-horns know their places in the tie-up.'

" 'She has got to serve us better than to fold her lady-like hands, and sigh and sob away the live-long day, over the ease and happiness which have forever passed away.'

" 'You know how many old garments we have got up in the garret? Well, I am going to have an overhauling there, and set her to work upon them. It will be just the kind of work for her, in her present situation, because she can do it in her own room, and keep her brats there too.'

" 'Only think, what nice large warm mats they will make for the entries, dining-room, and chambers appropriated to the hired men. And he can tie the thrumbs together which we want to weave into the horse-blankets, just as well as to lay there groaning and lounging away his time, to no possible purpose. Oh, we can make them useful, just with a little tact and persever-

ance. And I mean to do it, too, for it shall never be said that Esquire Stoneheart's mansion contains any live drones."

"A few days after the arrival of my parents at the Stoneheart mansion, a gentleman, who had known my father's family, heard of his misfortunes, and called immediately to express his heart-felt sympathy for them, suffering as they were from the afflictive dispensations which had so recently been visited upon them. But he had not prepared himself for such a recital of outrage, insult, tyranny, and degradation as fell from their trembling lips. And oh, how he wept, when they told him of the duplicity practised upon them in regard to their innocent children, the scene which followed, and their present hopeless position in regard to them.

"'Fear not,' said their kind friend, 'I will seek your children, and, under my own protection, if our lives are spared, they shall come safely to your yearning hearts.

"'And George,' he continued, addressing my father, 'arouse thee from this desponding torpor. All is not yet hopelessly lost. Your life, youth, and intellect are yet spared to you; and these dear ones too,' he said, looking around upon the little group, 'are they not worth another effort?

"'Come, George,' he continued, 'I loved your father too well to see his son remain long—a—a pauper, and in trouble too.

"I have a little unoccupied cottage a few miles from

here, and just the place for such a group as this. Take it, and when you have grown strong, and well, and prosperous, buy it, if you wish, but while you remain sick and poor it is yours, rent free.

“No thanks, George; keep your seat Mrs. Lee; I have as yet done nothing, and therefore wish for no demonstrations of gratitude. Yield yourselves to the repose you so much need, and in a very few days I will call on you again.” And he glided from the room so quietly, leaving such a ray of light, hope, and consolation, that it seemed like the departure of some heavenly visitant.

“It was many moments before either of the occupants of that dreary chamber could give utterance, in words, to their deep and heart-felt emotions. For my mother was weeping convulsively upon her husband’s bosom; and that bosom was heaving and struggling with the reacting tide of the turbid stream, through which they had so recently passed.

“‘And now,’ he said, ‘oh now the green fields are in view, the sunlight is pouring its beatific effulgence into my soul. I feel its invigorating, its life-giving vitality, to the heart’s core, warming and stimulating the sluggish current through every avenue of this emaciated form.

“‘Dear Effie,’ he continued, ‘I can bear those tears now; for I know that they are not born of sorrow and anguish, but are like the dew-drops of a summer’s morn, kissed away by the cheering sun-rays of prosperity and love.’”

CHAPTER XIV.

ANGELICA STONEHEART'S CASKET OF TREASURES. — TAKEN BY SURPRISE. — ESQ. HOMER'S GIFT OF GLEN COTTAGE TO THE LEES.

“**M**ISS ANGELICA had occupied much of her precious time amongst the old garments of the rag barrels, arranging and rearranging the textures, shades, and colors to her own precise, peculiar, and refined taste, into various piles, and then summing up the probable number of nice heavy mats which would be made from them by the delicate fingers of over-nice, ladylike pauperism.

“And so, a few mornings subsequent to the events narrated, she condescended to enter the little back chamber over the cook-room, followed by a pauper with a huge basket of assorted rags and cast-off clothing which she was ordered to deposit upon the only unoccupied space the small room would allow.

“‘Madam,’ she said haughtily, addressing my mother, ‘I have observed that, for a few days, you have grown rapidly convalescent, recovering marvellously from the woe-begone appearance you assumed on your first admission to my father’s keeping. And you are putting

on airs, too, of dignified independence, as though you felt not the loathsome degradation of a pauper's position.

“ ‘ You are very free indeed from the perplexities and cares of domestic duties, and so loftily raised in the scale of affluence, as to be the honored recipient of an annuity provided by the charitable donations of the residents of B—— ; and, in acquiescence to their wishes, my father has taken you within his affluent home.

“ ‘ It may be that has somewhat raised your ideas of self-consequence. Indeed, you already assume the regal dignity of an enthroned princess. But may I deign to ask a favor of your royal highness ?

“ ‘ There is a casket of treasures which, by my commands, have been deposited lavishly at your feet.’

“ Her back was turned to the door, and she saw not a tall form bending eagerly forward, with flushed cheek and kindling eyes, listening with painful interest to the words of insulting scorn which fell from her haughty lips.

“ ‘ Spare them further insult, Miss,’ he said, stepping quickly forward ; ‘ these are my friends, and no longer dependents within your affluent home.’

“ ‘ Come, George, and my dear Mrs. Lee,’ he said, taking her hand with the warm cordiality of a true friend. ‘ This is no place for you in your present state of health. Come with me ; the storm is severe without, but you had better brave the raging elements than the scorn and contempt of unprincipled arrogance and pride. Come, my

dear friends, no more tears, for angels — if angels can weep — have wept over your sorrows, and God himself has come to your assistance.’

“ Miss Angelica, with blanched cheek and trembling step, made a hasty retreat from the room.

“ She well knew who was this benevolent gentleman, the friend and benefactor of my parents, in this their time of bitter need. It was the wealthy Judge Homer ; and his son, a noble specimen of manhood, just graduated with the highest collegiate honors, had been paying very particular attention to Miss Angelica, and was just on the eve of a declaration, or rather, he had fully made up his mind to propose for her hand.

“ But when his father returned that evening, and narrated to his son the incidents of the morning, and the part performed by the beautiful Angelica, it somewhat cooled the ardor of his love for her ; and not wishing to address in person one whom he could not now respect, he penned her a note of dismissal ; and then, with his father’s consent, made preparations for a tour to a distant State.

“ My parents were speedily removed to the cottage which Judge Homer had provided ; and, through his influence, it was comfortably furnished by a few benevolent friends who had known my father in earlier days.

“ And thus, by a few dollars, the loss of which no one

felt the poorer, they were removed from the foul stigma and degradation of pauperism.

“ But the wound, deep and painful, had left its life-impress upon their hearts ; crushing down the hopes and aspirations which had so characterized them in other days.

“ By the influence of Judge Homer, John and Nelly were restored once more to the arms of our parents. And when the warm April suns and showers began to unfold the bursting buds of tree and flower, then I, a wee-bit, feeble thing, came to claim their love and care.

“ Years sped on, bringing with them the sunbeams and shadows of real life, adding another and another in helpless infancy to their little flock, though not as yet removing any from them by the relentless hand of death.

“ And so they struggled on, meekly and calmly, hoping and praying that the bright elysium would yet open to their view, and crown their unceasing efforts.

“ But every succeeding year brought them only what the past had done, an addition to their family, or expenses incurred by sickness, or misfortunes in various other ways beyond their power to avert.

“ ‘ Thus far shalt thou come, and no further,’ seemed written upon the success for which they had struggled so hopefully and so long. And my father, mentally and physically shattered, grew inert and desponding ; and my mother, feeble and emaciated from the weight of sorrow and the many cares which oppressed her.

“ John was obliged to leave his books and go to service. Farmer Smith held out glowing inducements to him, which he accepted for the sake of the dear ones at home.

“ ‘ Let us trust that God rules the destinies of men,’ said my mother, encouragingly to him, ‘ and may be that something will turn up for the better by-and-by.

“ ‘ After all, it is not so bad, Johnny ; you will be so near home, and can run in and play a bit with the baby, romp with Nelly, and spin the top a moment for Charley, read a story or two for Eddy, and bring me fresh wild flowers every morning from your own favorite dell, for my little vase on the mantle nook ; and when you are sick, you can come to me, and I shall nurse you so tenderly. O John, it might be worse. Cheer up, my noble boy, and hope for the best.’

“ And farmer Smith laid his broad, hard palm caressingly upon his shoulder, and said cheerfully, ‘ You must be my Johnny now. Bright and Golden are lazily chewing their cuds, waiting for the plow-boy’s whistle and smart “ jee-up.” The little black pony is capering at will over the highlands and lowlands, for want of an expert little rider. Old Rove stretches himself at leisure in his little sunny nook, waiting for a companion to chase the cunning fox, the bounding doe, the nimble squirrel, and explore the underground castles of the timid hare.

“ ‘ The fields of grain are waving their golden heads invitingly for the glittering sickle, and the reaper’s song.

And then will come the long merry hay-days, and corn-huskings, and apple-frolics, and cider-making, and — oh, such jolly times as we farmers have, worth all the schools and books, pronouns and professions in Christendom.’

“Time passed on, but my brother found no time for laughter or pleasant interchanges with the dear ones at home.

“The wee-bit baby had turned his violet eyes, with a coaxing ‘goo-goo,’ many, many times to the cottage door for the wonted smile and caress.

“Charlie’s top lay unspun, the stories unread; Nelly moped and sighed for the gleesome romp; the flowers had withered in the vase, which stood untouched in the little nook.

“Old Rove was still stretching himself at leisure, for the want of a companion in the merry chase; the little black pony bounded as lightly as ever over the highlands and lowlands, waiting for his expert little rider.

“His reaper’s song was the song of the captive. ‘The long, merry hay-days’ were any thing but a pastime and mirthfulness.

“Work, work, work, from early morn till the eventide. No days for relaxation. No hours for careless sport on the smooth green lawn, where the restless school-boy rolled his ball and hoop.

“No time to ease his heart-yearnings and heart-achings with books or play. But in the deep midnight hour,

when none but the All-seeing witnessed his lofty aspirations, he resolved to press onward and upward, never diverging from the right, though myriads of formidable barriers should appear to obstruct his progress.

“ ‘ Great men have lived before me,’ he said ; ‘ great men will live after me. And what has made them great ? What more will make them great, but indomitable will and perseverance ? They are at my command, they shall be my servants. The path to honor is not one of repose ; nor can I hope to be transported, without an effort, to the enchanting bowers of paradisiacal ease and beauty. But “ onward and upward ” shall be my motto, never diverging from the right till the elysian is in view, and the prize won and secured.’



CHAPTER XV.

LIFE'S CHANGES.—THE LEES IN GLEN COTTAGE.—THE FEARFUL
VISITANT.—EFFIE AND HER BROTHER ALONE.

“FIFTEEN YEARS! What a long space in the annals of time. How many have grown from childhood to youth. How many from youth to manhood. How many from maturity have passed somewhat adown the shady side, and from green old age to helpless imbecility.

“Many, with joyful acclamations, have been ushered into existence; and many, with the wail of despair and broken hopes, have passed along to the spirit-land.

“Fortunes have been won and lost. Friends have deserted and forgotten. Eyes have wept, hearts have bled, which have been unused to sorrow. And death has borne along, on the sweeping tide, the rich spoils he has gathered in the space of fifteen long years.

“And they had passed away since my parents took possession of their cottage home, and I had come with feeble wail to claim their love and care. Time and sorrow had not passed lightly over that humble home; for the voices of gladness and mirth, that erst rever-

berated there, were hushed, one after another, in the silence of sorrow and death.

“Yes, that stern messenger, Death, entered many times unbidden that cottage door.

“First, the joyful carol of the baby-pet was hushed in death. The tiny, waxen fingers lay motionless over the pulseless bosom; and the soft, blue-veined lids drooped heavily over the violet-tinted eyes.

“How the little band then flocked together to weep their tears of sorrow over our little wee-pet, and whisper a word of condolence to each stricken heart. Oh! it was sorrow such as had never before visited our humble home.

“The little family had been scattered long before, but not in death. Other homes had sheltered them, but sometimes they fled back to our own home-nest to mingle together our tears of joy and sorrow.

“Now one had departed. Our little household idol had been shattered, and our hearts bled that it must be so. How silent and desolate seemed our home, when its joyful carols were hushed. O Death! how unwelcome were thy visitations in our little home. Not one too many had ever come to gladden our humble abode. Poor, but the mite was not meagrely divided.

“The turf was yet fresh over the baby’s little grave, when another little mound was raised by its tiny side. Charley had laid himself wearily down beside his childish

toys, as a white-winged seraph floated around him, whispering of heaven, of golden harps, of angel bands ; wooing him with soft, delicious, and enchanting strains to her happy spirit-home.

“ Then Eddy, the little studious Eddy, grew pale and wan and weary. A brighter light was in his eye, a deeper flush was on his cheek, and a hollow cough fell like a funereal knell upon the heart of his anxious mother. Nought could save him ; for when the autumn winds swept rudely by, and the summer flowers faded away from the earth, then they laid him quietly down beside the baby’s grave, in the long and sweet repose of death.

“ Then Nelly, the eldest born, so good and gentle withal, she in whom my mother had trusted to lean upon in life’s decline, passed away like a summer flower ; and oh ! how we missed her in our cottage home. We missed her gleesome laugh, her lightsome song, her sisterly greetings, and welcome smiles. We missed her by the hearth-stone, where we wept in heart-felt sorrow over her untimely departure.

“ Oh ! how desolate had our home become ; none now remained in that dear home-nest but John and myself to cheer the hearts of our stricken parents. And yet the cravings of death were not appeased, till husband and sire had been sacrificed upon the funereal pyre ; and we and my mother returned alone and broken-hearted to our desolate home and silent hearth.

“My mother lived on, but hope seemed to have taken its final departure from her. There were no bright rays peering through the deep dark folds which closed so ominously around her in those hours of widowed loneliness.

“But one day the death-summons came to her, and sudden and fearful was his coming.

“A deep groan of anguish arrested my ear. I knew my mother was dying, for the purple life-blood oozed slowly out from her pale, rigid lips, while she fell heavily back into my extended arms, murmuring, in broken accents, ‘God help you, my children, for you will soon be alone — alone — in a cold — cold — world. Alone —’

“‘O mother! mother!’ I cried, in frantic dismay, ‘you must not, cannot die, and leave us here alone. God will not take you from us. He will not lay His hand so unkindly, so heavily upon us.

“‘Has He not already made our home and our hearts desolate? Oh, so desolate! And will He now be so unjust as to tear asunder the bleeding, quivering wounds, deep in the heart’s core, His oft-repeated scourge has inflicted there?’

“‘Can God be merciful,’ I asked, in that moment of frantic grief, ‘and yet deal so unkindly with the creatures He has made in His own likeness and for His own pleasure?’

“‘What have we done to call down His vengeance so

oft and so heavily upon us? Oh God! — if there is a God, — stay thy hand, and spare the remaining victims of thy fearful, unmerited vengeance.’

“ ‘Effie!’ whispered my dying mother, ‘there is a God. Never, no never, in all the sorrows of thy after-life, give up thy hope, thy trust in Him. He will surely be to thee an anchor firm and steadfast as the Rock of Ages.’

“ ‘Lean upon Him in all the ills that betide thee, and it will be well. I am dying; trust in God, my children, and you will find Him all-sufficient. He will never, never forsake you.’

“ ‘O mother! mother!’ I cried in dismay, ‘you must not die! We cannot part with you! We cannot live without your love! O mother! stay yet a little while longer, or take us with you.’

“ But she heard not my frantic appeal, for the pulses had ceased their vibrations, and that loved form was cold and rigid in death.

“ Who can portray the feelings of a desolate one, when all of life and love and hope have departed; when all the heart-blossoms have withered and faded away; when hope’s meteor light no longer flashes in the distance; and despair throws around us the drapery of sable gloom?

“ It was thus with me and my brother, as we sat by the vacant hearth in our silent and desolate home. No

lightsome tread or gladsome voice cheered its silent gloom. No friendly condolence fell like the healing balm upon our wounded hearts. No strong arm was extended to lead and support us through life's dreary pathway.

“ Oh, how we missed the glad voices that erst rang out in innocent glee, when we romped together in our childish sports. But they had all passed away, and a sad, sad change had been wrought in our childhood's home.”



CHAPTER XVI.

EFFIE'S BROTHER BECOMES A STUDENT. — HIS SUDDEN DEATH. —

EFFIE ALONE AND HOMELESS. — RESORTS TO A COTTON MILL.

— KATE STANTON'S DEBUT.

“OUR HOME became insupportable to us in its loneliness, after they had all passed away; and as my brother was wishing to pursue his education, we proposed to dispose of the cottage and a few acres of land belonging to it; the proceeds of which would enable him to go forward in that desired object.

“I was to remain with an acquaintance until he could make provision for me, in the vicinity of the Institution, where he designed to pursue his studies, the completion of which would prepare him for usefulness and honor in the ranks of the world.

“He had been a student in that institution about six months, when a letter reached me with the information that he had procured for me a very desirable situation in the family of one of the teachers, where I could have the benefit of a superior school, the advantages of a quiet home and daily intercourse with him, for the mere trifling expense of a few hours of needle-work, daily

given to the family as a recompense for my board. I thankfully availed myself of this proposal, and immediately set out, in compliance with his request, to join him in the distant village of A——, and take up my abode in a stranger's home.

“When I arrived I found my brother in the wild delirium of a malignant fever. The old doctor shook his head ominously, when I wildly interrogated him for a word of hope and encouragement, in relation to his recovery.

“My heart had been bounding and leaping, with hopeful anticipations, through that long, and it seemed almost endless journey, to meet my dear, my only brother, where I could weep out all my heart-sorrows, and twine a garland from my newly fledged hopes and the bursting flower-buds which had so recently sprung up beneath the sunny rays of my young life-path, reaching far away into the undimmed future.

“And I could not, oh, I could not fall back again into the dark shadows which had ever before thrown around me their bereaving shroud.

“A few hours after my arrival, my brother lay still and cold in the repose of death, in the sleep that knows no earth-waking.

“Many were the prayers which were offered up to the orphan's God for the bereft sister. Many were the tears of sympathy which fell unfeignedly for the

orphaned stranger. Many were the words of condolence which trembled upon the lips, to soothe my heart-anguish. All, all were like mockeries to my stricken and desolate heart.

“I could not be comforted. There was no earth-balm that could heal the bleeding lacerations of my lone heart; and I cried out, in my deep anguish, with the psalmist: ‘ Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.’

“They buried him beneath the cypress shade, in the little enclosure appropriated to the stranger and student, while his classmates and friends reared a memento of respect above his silent resting-place.

“I could not remain in A——; I could not return to the desolations of my childhood’s home; for every association was so interwoven with the dark, painful, afflicting bereavements of the past, as to make remembrance, and even life itself, unendurable.

“Study seemed loathsome to the overwrought emotions of my bereaved heart; and I longed for forgetfulness, for annihilation even, to shroud me from the painful, insupportable memories of the past.

“But death and forgetfulness come not at our bidding; and so I have sought the din, and clatter, and excitements of a cotton mill to lull ——”

A loud peal of merry laughter broke like a flood of sunlight upon the orphan’s sad recital; and the next

moment a gay, laughing, rollicking girl, bounded into the room, setting chairs, tables, and band-boxes to dancing Yankee reels and devil's jigs, by the wild outbursts of her youthful hilarity, "which," she said, "was just as much a part and parcel of her nature, as the marrow was to the bone of Jack the Giant-killer.

"I am," she continued, "just as natural as a natural fool; and could not for the life of me conceal my cloven foot, even if King Solomon, in all his glory, should appear before me in the dazzling radiance of his majesty and power.

"Sister Sarah, that little demure Methodist girl, whom Mother Gourdon designates my 'chum,' tells me that I'm in the broad road to destruction, and unless I wheel about and take up my burden, and creep through the little narrow gate, or the camel's eye — I've forgotten which, — that there 'll be no mercy or hope for me. Just as if such a leopard as I could change these spots for the snowy plumage of a dove, or an angel's drapery.

"I can digest her 'amens,' and 'glories,' and 'halle — hallelujah's,' and all that; but her fire and brimstone I can't swallow."

"O Kate Stanton! will you never give over your wild freaks?" said a soft voice behind me, and looking up I saw a very sweet, placid face, half hidden within the deep shadow of a plain Shaker bonnet, with large dark

eyes bent half sadly, half reproachfully, upon the gay girl whom she had designated as Kate Stanton.

“ Wild oats must be sown, sister Sarah, and the sooner they are scattered to the four winds, the better it will be for the peace of all concerned.

“ So let me work while the day lasts, and the sun shines, and the flowers bloom, and the rivulets leap, and dance, and sing, for the joy that now is; while the rainbow of hope and promise is bright and undimmed in my life-sky.

“ Dark clouds will come soon enough, and until they do,

‘ We’ll make the best of life we can,
Nor render it a curse.’

She went on, singing in her wild, rollicking glee,

‘ And since we are here, with friends so dear,
We’ll drive dull cares away.’

“ I shall remember you at the throne of grace, Kate,” said sister Sarah, meekly, as she took her little book of Revival Hymns, and went noiselessly out to meet her brethren in the social class.

“ I shall be ever so much obliged to you, sister Sarah, if you will; for I always like to be remembered to my best friends. Only I wish I was a little more worthy of remembrance. But don’t sing that dubious song, ‘ We

won't go home till morning ;' because, if you do; you will find me, and the bed too, a dreadful one-sided affair when you do come.

' Sing me the songs that I used to hear,
Long, long ago — long, long ago.' ”

The pale, drooping Effie, had nestled closer to my side, and pillowed her bright head lovingly upon my shoulder, while the gay Kate Stanton flitted out and in like a fairy elf, carrying sunshine and gladness wherever she went, till the heavy booming of the factory bells announced the hour of bedtime.

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CHAPTER XVII.

EFFIE BECOMES A FACTORY GIRL.—KATE STANTON TAKING LESSONS IN THE MYSTERIES OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

THE NEXT morning Effie and I mingled with the throng which rushed through the ample gateway, or thoroughfare, opening into the M—— yard ; where she, for the first time, was ushered into a cotton mill, and introduced to my overseer, who readily consented to receive her.

Informing her that she could be my “ spare hand,” for a week or two ; and by that time the looms adjoining mine would be vacated by the present occupant, who was already on her notice, to which she should be the successor.

Effie's large blue eyes glistened with a hopeful tear at this announcement, and her pale cheek flushed with animation, when I answered her interrogation, as to the meaning of “ spare hand.”

“ Then we are not to be separated, Rosa dear ? ” she ejaculated. “ This is so kind ; I know my task will be light and pleasant too, with you always by my side.

How much I have to thank you for, my very dear friend."

So Effie and I became inseparable companions. I instructed her in the art and mysteries of clogs, belts, drums, flying shuttles, dresser's knots, and the many little essentials belonging to a good weaver; to all of which I found her an expert and tractable pupil, as well as companion and friend.

Thus days and weeks and months flew pleasantly and rapidly by, with very little change or variation, save an occasional letter from our friends, or some wild, uproarious freak of Kate Stanton, with the little sanctimonious sister Sarah, which always ended with a halle-hallelujah from the little Revival Hymn-book, or the promise that she would make her the burden of her prayers the next class-night. "And," she continued, "I have faith to believe that the time will come when you will be one of the strong pillars of the church which you now so lightly and thoughtlessly revile."

"And when I do, sister Sarah," answered Kate, laughingly, "you may be sure that I shall never be guilty of hiding my light under a bushel, nor burying my talent in the sand-bank. But you will find me in the pulpit, or on the house-top, or a watchman upon the strong walls of Bashan, or a travelling preacher, with the whole world for a circuit.

"But your itinerants and locals, and superannuaries,

x's, and units, pshaw, I shall make a shaking amongst the dry bones when I do start, sister Sarah, which will make up for all the time I have wasted in my outfit and Vanity Fair preparations. I am even now taking lessons in the mysteries of woman's rights, and when I have so far advanced as to be a good imitator of Lucy Stone, or some of her contemptibles, I am going to start out on a lecturing tour against the rights of man generally, from the Lilliputian Tom Thumb to old Adam, away back in the garden of Eden, who didn't know any better than to nibble that apple, just because his silly wife told him that he must.

“Wasn't he a thorough-going woman's rights man? And didn't that serpent know it too, when he offered her that apple, and told her to give Adam a piece, and all that.

“Well, so you see that through her means the whole world has become depopulated; and Eden is not the only place that has Adams and Eves, and serpents and apples, and advocates of the woman's rights system. Mother Eve has got some representatives left yet, and daughters too, who wouldn't mind nibbling an apple now and then, with an Adam or too to munch the other side of it.

“I say it is time that there were some strong-minded women, like myself, to come to the rescue of the weaker party. And I'll do it, only let me get my lesson first, and there will be more than one broken jug that will cry out 'Katy-did.'”

“ But I’m going out now, and spring is coming in, that gay, laughing, rollicking, dancing spring, just like this wildwood Kate.

“ Yes, I’m going out; out of the mill, out of the boarding-house, out of the Spindle City, out into the broad sunlight, out into the country, out among the flowers, out into the wildwoods and glens and mountain passes, out into the clear, free dancing zephyrs, and, out of my wits, I verily believe, for the kind condescension of my mother, in permitting me to undertake this great feat of visiting her and my home in the back-woods, after eighteen months of this nunnery sort of life in a cotton-mill.

“ But don’t flatter yourself, sister Sarah, that there is any peace for the wicked; for I’m coming back again. ‘ Oh, a factory life is the life for me,’ ” she sang gaily. “ Yes, I’m coming back again after the sacrifice has been offered up. For wild as I am, I never could look calmly upon martyrdom and the offering up of innocence upon the altar of a —— ”

“ What mean you, Kate ? ” I asked, surprised at the turn her raillery had taken.

“ What mean I, Rosa ? ” Why, I mean that the lamb never can lie down with the wolf in these degenerate times, without making the sacrifice of life and limb for its innocent presumption.

“ That little weeping willow of ours, or yours, pure

as the snow-flake, spotless as the lily's folds, beautiful as the morning, gentle as the floating zephyr of a summer's eve, unsuspecting as the cooing dove, is about to make a sacrifice of all, and more, of happiness and life, to that Balaam's a— long-eared colt. Oh, I lose all patience when I think how blinded you all are by the false blandishments and pretensions assumed by that unprincipled, heartless villain, Wilton Harriman."

"If he is a villain, Kate, he wears his mask well. For it seems to me that I have never seen one more perfectly a gentleman, more noble in heart and soul and principle, than Wilton Harriman. And so active, too, in the church, in the prayer-meetings, so earnest in his exhortations to the unconverted ——"

"All moonshine, Rosa ; a wolf in sheep's clothing, artfully concealing his long ears and claws from the little lamb he has singled out, to gloat himself at leisure upon the warm life-blood of her young heart, till the sacrifice is complete. Why, I do believe that Nature herself will cry out against this unequal — oh, I know not what to call it ; for the day has not arrived when the lamb and the lion can lie down together in peaceful security and happy trust."

"Nevertheless, Kate, I hope, for dear Effie's sake, that your penetration will prove defective for once in your life. And I even think it will. For, aside from his prepossessing appearance, his lofty principle, and unblemished

character, he has a home of comfort and security to offer to our stricken lamb, our orphaned Effie."

"Better a thousand, a thousand times better spend her life in a cotton mill, free from care and from sorrow as the mountain zephyrs which fan the wild flowers by the dancing stream.

"No, I can never see her give that little sinless hand into the keeping of a tyrant's sensual grasp. I am going home, and when I return again the sacrifice will be made, and Effie will be far away."



CHAPTER XVIII. .

KATE STANTON GONE TO THE WILD-WOODS. — EFFIE BECOMES A BRIDE. — HER HAPPY LEAVE-TAKING.

ONE YEAR had flown happily by since Effie's introduction to factory life ; and she had grown very beautiful and hopeful and lovely, when Wilton Harriman came a stranger to our city, and, attracted by her beauty and gentleness withal, he sought and won her for his trusting bride.

A new life seemed to dawn upon her, lighting, with unclouded brilliancy, the far-off future ; for Effie's warm, impulsive nature, seemed at once to yield to the cheering influence of his bland smiles and tender wooings.

And when he asked her to become his own little wife, and go with him to his rural home, she laid her hand all trustingly within his, and murmured forth her heart's devotion, all unconscious that treachery lay concealed beneath that handsome, calm, and graceful exterior.

She could not penetrate with her love-blinded eyes, as Kate did, his shallow-heartedness, or see the dark plague-spots which lay concealed beneath the assumed ex-

pression of devotional love and tenderness, which he so well knew how to call forth subservient to his will.

The winter had passed, the spring-tide was chanting melodies all around us. Kate had flown to her native bowers, and May, beautiful, joyous, laughing May, had come to twine a bridal wreath of sunshine and flowers around the fair white brow of the happy bride.

They were to be married at the parsonage; and every arrangement had been completed for them to proceed directly to their distant home.

The bridal morning dawned, but the sky was completely shrouded in the pall-like blackness of the tomb, and the rain poured down in fearful torrents upon the already drenched earth.

Not even a zephyr swept by to change the fearful monotony of that bridal morn. Were Kate's words prophetic? which said, "I do believe that nature will cry out against this unequal — oh, I know not what to call it."

A something seemed to whisper, "they were. Nature weeps over the dark fate of the orphan bride." How I would at that moment have plucked her as a brand from the burning, and sheltered that innocent lamb, in my heart of hearts, from the fire and the altar upon which I feared the love and hopes of her young life must so soon be offered up as a sacrifice.

I would not, for the world, have breathed my sus-

picious to Effie, for she looked upon him as a being of immaculate purity and perfection. .

They were married ; and, when the guests had all departed, I pressed her hands within my own, and looked down, down, through the clear depths of her love-lit eyes, into the heart where no guile or fear of treachery had ever entered.

“ Effie,” I whispered, “ you are happy now ; and God grant that the love-light which now throws its radiance upon your life-path, may never again be darkened by the storm-clouds of sorrow. But should they come upon you, Effie,” I said, with emphasis, “ as come they may, then come to me, and remember that my heart and hand are ready to receive you.

“ Although all others turn coldly away, and pass by on the other side, regardless of your need, this heart will ever be ready to receive and cherish you. I am your long-tried friend, and you know that I am not one to change lightly.”

Effie could not speak the words which trembled upon her lips, but I read, in the expression of the tearful eyes, the language of her grateful, appreciative heart.

“ Mr. Harriman,” I continued, resigning the fair white hand of the bride to its rightful owner, “ take the prize you have won. Cherish it in your heart of hearts ; and let no sorrow, which your own faithful love

and manly arm can crush back, come near to mar the blissful anticipations of her bridal morn.

“Deal kindly and gently with the lone and stricken dove which folds her weary wings and nestles so trustingly within thy manly bosom. The Lord do so to thee, and more also, if thou betrayest the sacred trust reposed in thee, or turn from the pure heart you have won, to bow in guilt at another’s shrine.”

He took the hand of his bride, and led her to the carriage which was to convey her from the friends who had loved her long and well.

Effie waved me a kindly adieu, while the tears fell from the long drooping lashes, mingling with the heavy shower-drops which gathered thickly and ominously around her.

I shuddered, as I thought of the fate which might await the bride in her husband’s home, and involuntarily sent up a prayer to high Heaven in behalf of the orphan upon whom the hand of God had been so oft and so heavily laid, that the doom might pass on and away from that innocent and guileless one.

The sun peered through the scattering storm-clouds, and anon burst upon us with all the effulgence of its unclouded splendor.

The storm had passed away, and not another cloud was visible upon the clear blue sky through that long summer’s day. And a glorious day it was, with the

broad golden sunlight, the smiling flowers, and fragrant buds, bursting into bloom.

The clear, shrill music of the woodland songsters rang through the deep, heavy foliage of the swaying branches; the loud murmuring of the swollen streams and distant water-falls mingling with the joyful bleating of the flocks and lowing of the herd on the hills and pasture-land.

Oh, such music: the music of nature all around me; the broad golden sunlight laying upon the green herbage; the smiling flowers, the shower-drenched earth; all burst upon me like a holy unction from the spirit-world.

And involuntarily I exclaimed, "God grant, Effie, that such thy future life may be. Unclouded sunshine upon thy flower-strewn path, music and melody in thy heart, and in thy home, and in the world beyond."

I thanked God for the sunlight, for the clear blue sky, and the sweet music which rang out from the forest bowers; and for the gladsome murmuring of the waterfalls, and the fragrance of the bursting flower-buds, which swept along on the light-winged zephyrs on this, our Effie's bridal day.

And I tried to drive away from my mind the ominous forebodings of the morning, as the storm-clouds had been scattered by the summer breeze; hoping and praying that she had drank the last drop from her bitter cup of sorrow.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHANGES IN NUMBER TEN.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE EASTHAM CAMP-MEETING.—SISTER LULA'S DEPARTURE TO THE SPIRIT-WORLD.—VISIT TO MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.—EFFIE'S HEART IS BREAKING.

MANY CHANGES were being wrought in No. 10 during the summer months. Some, like Effie, had gone out with the bridal wreath circling their fair young brows; with the bright halo of love illuminating their hearts, and throwing a mellow radiance along their future life-path; as though no dark storm-clouds would ever arise to shatter their love-freighted bark out upon the broad ocean of matrimonial felicity.

Some, like Kate, had only gone out into the wild-woods and glens, among the green fields and fresh wild-flowers and sparkling streams and broad sunshine, to sip the nectar from the mountain zephyrs, and return again, laden with the aroma of a thousand flowers, ere the autumn winds should sound their clarion, loud and shrill, from their mountain eyry.

Sister Sarah—free alike from her persecutor and

persecutions, and happy as her prayers and little Revival Hymn Book and class meetings and social gatherings could make her — was busily preparing for the Eastham camp-meeting, where the old ship of Zion was moored with safety every year, laden with faithful volunteers, clad in their bright and glittering armors, ready to conquer or to die in the great opposing battle of sin and the world.

And I was preparing for an approaching event in my own life history, whether of weal or of woe, of sunshine or of shadows, the heart's prophecy would not disclose to me.

But suffice it, I had given my heart's best and purest love to one who, I doubted not, would cherish it in a heart as true and faithful as my own.

I saw no ominous shadows looming up in the future before me. Every thing seemed wrapt in a charm of mystic beauty and enchantment. My future life-path seemed strewn with thornless roses, with undimmed and unbroken sunshine.

I felt that to possess the love of my husband, was all-sufficient for my future life-bliss, whether I dwelt in a forest cabin or a palace of luxurious wealth.

“Rich! would not his love be an inexhaustible treasure to the lone heart which had grown chill and sluggish by the sorrowful bereavements of former years? And would it not be bliss to lean upon the strong, manly

arm of my heart's chosen, which could and would protect me from every harm and threatening danger? And shielded in his heart of hearts, no ill could betide me.

And yet, with all these blissful anticipations, I could not bid adieu to the pleasant associations of my factory life, and go out from the protecting roof of No. 10 and the kind matron who presided there, without a tear of regret and a sad farewell.

Often, a little missive of sisterly remembrance had reached me from Lula, but every line traced therein seemed like the plaintive moanings of a stricken dove. Her heart was with her idols; and she mourned for them as the lone dove mourns for the mate of its summer bowers.

I knew that they were calling her to their far-off elysium, and often, around her lonely pillow, floated the soft spirit-strains :

“ We are coming, sister Lula, we are coming by and by ;
Be ready, sister Lula, for the time is drawing nigh.”

Two years I had been a wife, when a summons came to me that Lula was passing away,—soaring aloft to the higher life. As the fragrance from the crushed flower is borne along by the passing zephyr, so she was passing, all gently and silently, to the spirit-world.

Again I hastened to the bedside of a dying sister.

Dying? No! I have never made her dead, although she breathed her last breath of the mortal upon my throbbing bosom.

Even now, I hear her light form flitting by, and hear the glad music tones of her sisterly greetings, and feel, — yes, many times I have felt her gentle touch upon my shoulder, when tears and sorrow, desertion and despair have darkly enveloped my life-path, and heard her soft whisperings of hope directing me to a future of sunshine and flowers.

They laid her beside her heart's idols, in the little rural enclosure appropriated to the family, where the fir and the cypress and the summer flowers blend in lofty anthems of praise, such as the angels hear and chant together. Still, —

“ She comes to me, and the solemn joy
Of her presence fills my room ;
Though far away, on a sunny slope,
Where I know the violets bloom,
Her grave is bright with the spring's first gift,
And fragrant with its perfume.

“ She comes to me when I dream alone,
In the hearth-glow bright and warm,
And hear the wail of the wintry winds,
As they strive with night and storm ;
She holds my hand, and leads me on,
Far into the golden morn.

“Ah! well I know that the violets blue
Are vailing her tender eyes,
But calm and deep in my soul they smile
Through the blooms of Paradise;
And still I lean to her gentle clasp,
Where darkest my pathway lies.”

Once more I sought the enclosure where our mother was peacefully reposing, and wept upon the senseless turf the tears which welled up from a breaking heart. How fleeting and shadow-like life appeared to me when I bade adieu to the scenes of my childhood and the graves of those loved ones for my distant home.

When I arrived there I found letters awaiting my return; one from Effie, one from Kate, and some from the Spindle City.

“Effie!” How eagerly I grasped the little delicate missive her own hand had folded for her absent friend. I had never seen Effie since her bridal morn; and somehow, of late, her letters had been few, and not very confidential.

But I knew, from the sad tones and expressions of her few communications, that the storm had gathered around her, and was bursting relentlessly upon her defenceless head.

Yes, I knew, long ago, that her heart was breaking, and he in whom she had trusted so confidently had grown cold, perhaps unfaithful, or, indeed, had utterly deserted her.

I learned it all from the few letters which vainly made an effort to represent a cheerful, hopeful spirit, and a heart which would safely repose in the love of its idol.

But here she speaks of desertion, utter, hopeless desertion, and a heart breaking from the intensity of its grief and utter loneliness.

“And oh!” she continued, “my heart yearns for the scenes and associations of my childhood, that my tortured and burning brain may be soothed by the tears shed over a mother’s grave, and cheated into forgetfulness. Oh! that I could forget the crushing, blighting sorrows of my later years.

“Thus it has been with my whole life; with all that I loved, all that I have hoped for or trusted in. A chilling mist, a mildew blight, the blackness and darkness of despair, have shrouded and blasted forever.

“And the hope of solace in my childhood’s home, is perhaps only another disappointment in store for me. Yet she, who now presides there, was in my happier days my friend and confidant. We loved as sisters love. But oh! adversity and sorrow bring desertion, and she too will be changed.”

With a heart throbbing with painful emotions, I laid aside the letter of that heart-broken one, and turned for relief to that of the light-hearted, joyous Kate Stanton.

This informed me, that she was taking a tour through

some of the British provinces and eastern Maine, where she designed to spend a few weeks with an old maiden aunt of her mother's; after which, on her way to the Spindle City, she designed to visit me in my home at R——, when she would give me a verbal account of her travels herself, and all the wild freaks in which she had participated through her eastern tour.



CHAPTER XX.

KATE STANTON'S VISIT. — HER TOUR THROUGH MAINE. — DESCRIPTION OF HEATHERTON HALL AND WILLOW DALE.

IT WAS a cold, stormy autumn evening, that on which Kate Stanton arrived at my dwelling, and, after the first glad greetings were over, the tea things removed, and the fire replenished, so that it imparted a genial light and heat to our cosy little sitting-room, Kate leaned leisurely back in the comfortable arm-chair, and commenced a rambling sketch of her journey to the East.

“ You know, Rosa,” she commenced, “ that I was always fond of adventure, and also a great lover of the wild and romantic, the grand and sublime of nature.

“ Well, for several weeks I had been travelling and feasting with delight upon the wild scenes which presented themselves to my view, through the wildest portions of eastern Maine, as also across the boundary to the dominions of the British queen.

“ I had made the tour of many of its romantic rivers, up to the wild clearings of Moosehead Lake I had

looked far away over its glassy surface to the dark pine-clad highlands, where neither the axe or footsteps had ever reverberated.

“I had climbed over the charred logs and smoking turf to look within a logger’s cabin or a new settler’s hut.

“I had threaded wild forest-paths to get a peep within an Indian’s wigwam and listen to the strains of the dark-eyed forest flower, while she wove her baskets of fanciful colorings beside her Indian lover.

“I had sat me dreamily down beneath the forest pines, where the Red men had lighted their council fires, and danced to the wild war-song of their fearless chieftains.

“I had rested me beside the glassy lake, where the plumed warrior had twined the rich wampum, amidst the dark braids of his forest princess, while she chanted to him the tales and legends of her noble sires.

“Spell-bound, I had watched the soft moonbeams flittering coquettishly over the rippling wave, broken here and there by the lazy motion of a passing skiff or a boatman’s oar, keeping time to the mellow strains of ‘row, boatman, row.’

“I had climbed fearful steepes to the mountain’s brow, and looked far, far down into the deep abyss below.

“I had travelled over highlands and lowlands, through the wild woods and clearings, where the deer bounded

lightly over the knarled and tangled wildwood, and the howlings of the hungry wolf rang fearfully out from his hidden recess.

“ I had followed the various windings of the far-famed Penobscot and romantic St. Croix, and cooled my brow in the clear waters of the Passamaquoddy Bay.

“ I have sailed around its pretty islands, its bold and rugged bluffs, and paid a passing tribute to the venerable ‘ frair,’ who for centuries has stood like a faithful sentinel at his post, an object of interest to the artist and tourist.

“ I had looked far away over the grand old ocean, where the majestic steamship seemed a tiny, floating feather upon the white-dashing foam of its hissing mountain waves.

“ I had roamed over the parks and pleasure-grounds of English nobility, and knelt in thoughtful mood beside the marble urns of their lamented dead.

“ I had been a welcome guest within a fisher’s hut, and listened with delight to their tales of wild and perilous adventures.

“ I had looked within the mouldering and rusty ruins of ancient magnificence, and filled my palms with mementos from demolished forts and long-deserted battle-grounds.

“ I had visited crowded jails and the prison cells, almshouses and asylums, houses of reform, and the resorts of the fashionable elite.

“I had visited juvenile schools and colleges for the classical student.

“I had been a recipient of favors from the queen’s royal household, and disdainfully spurned by cod-fish aristocracy. I had received many a heart-felt ‘God bless you,’ and listened oft to the muttered curses of envious hate.

“I had feasted upon wild forest scenes, unbroken for many and many a mile, save only by some rude and wild convulsion of nature, and listened spell-bound to the sweet gushing melody which floated out from its hidden recesses.

“And thus for many weeks I had passed from scene to scene, almost intoxicated with the wild beauties and sublimity alternately presented to my view, till, weary and travel worn, I at last reluctantly turned my course to the tune of ‘homeward bound.’

“I had resolved to take the shore towns on my homeward tour, not only for variety of scene, but partially, as I have told you, to visit an old maiden aunt of my mother’s, who, although possessing many broad acres and the antiquated home of her father’s sire, was one of the kindest and most eccentric old dames in existence.

“I had heard this from my mother, and wishing to explore the old castle-like mansion of my venerable sires, whose magnificence and glory had long ago departed, I booked my name at the principal stage-office

of a provincial town for 'Heatherton Hall, Willow Dale.'

"My heart bounded lightly, and my head too, dear Rosa, as I seated myself in an old box-wagon which served for a public stage-coach, set in motion by the lash and lingo of an uncouth driver upon the backs of two fiery Canadian grays.

"But it was a fine summer's morning. The air was fresh and balmy; the sun was rising gloriously from out a forest of pines, which nodded fantastically here and there, in the light morning breeze.

"Undisturbed by the few tired and sleepy occupants of the old vehicle, I soon and willingly yielded to the inspiration which the wild and changing scenes produced.

"I scarcely heeded time or distance, so infatuated was I with the wild and picturesque beauties which surrounded me.

"And not until the long summer twilight had deepened into a more sober hue, could I arouse myself from the spell-like reveries in which I had indulged through that long summer's day.

"Nearly the whole of the afternoon we had travelled through a wild unbroken forest, with no signs of life or civilization save only now and then the ashes, or charred logs, where the weary or benighted traveller had lighted a fire for security, as he sought repose within those forest shades, or waited impatiently for the morrow's dawn to proceed in safety on his lonely journeyings.

“This vast extent of woodland surpassed every thing of a wild, picturesque, novel beauty, that my most glowing imagination had ever conceived.

“Here it seemed that nature had played her wildest freaks, carelessly throwing together and combining, in rude masses, beauty and deformity, light and shade, life and music, as also the death-like silence of hushed desolation.

“Huge masses of rocks were piled one above the other hundreds of feet, as though rudely thrown together by some mighty convulsion of nature, and left in a threatening position, as if to terrify or destroy all who dared to venture within their fearful locality.

“On the other hand, the clear, smooth surface of an inland lake, sparkling in the sunbeams, glimmered through the overarching branches, as the light breeze lifted the deep heavy foliage from their forest bowers.

“Then, all so suddenly, the dashing, foaming waters of a mountain torrent came leaping and bounding along, as if, in its rude sport, it would sweep us on and away into the deep stream below.

“Oh! it was wild, majestic, and grand! that forest scene.

“There the nimble deer sported fearlessly the live-long day. The wolf and bear roamed at large, or rested securely in their wild retreat.”

CHAPTER XXI.

KATE STANTON'S UNEXPECTED MEETING WITH EFFIE LEE. —
THEY JOURNEY TOGETHER.

“**T**WILIGHT, as I said, was giving place to the more sober hues of evening, ere we left the forest road, and sought repose within a wayside inn, erected upon the rude clearings of an eastern wilderness. This was situated at the junction of stage-roads, and other travellers were there before us. Among them was a pale, sad-looking woman, soothingly endeavoring to hush the weary moanings of a sickly child.

“With an impulse of sympathy I could not resist, my heart went out to her, and, taking a seat by her side, with a word of kindly greeting, she immediately turned her tear-drenched face full upon me; but her words of sad response instantly gave place to the joyful acclamations of recognition. ‘Kate!’ ‘Effie!’ Her head, for it was indeed Effie, fell convulsively upon my throbbing bosom, and she wept long and bitterly.

“I knew that those tears were a heart-balm; and so I gently took her child from her trembling arms, and

beguiled it with childish tales into a sweet and soothing repose.

“ I knew by the deep and settled expression of anguish upon Effie’s brow, and the ready tears which came alternately to the trembling lashes, that the deep fountain of her heart had been rudely and painfully stirred. And the deep sobs and sighs of anguish which sounded in my ears at intervals, through the entire night, only served to confirm the painful conviction.

“ But not for once did I dream how desolate and lone she had become, nor how deep the flood, and scathing the fire of affliction through which she had so recently passed.

“ I was gratified to learn that her course lay in the same direction of my own, and was pleased, on the following morning, although she looked paler and sadder, to see her take the unoccupied seat by my side in that rude old coach.

“ I tried, as best I could, to divert her mind from its crushing sorrows, and bring back once more the smiles and sunshine to her still handsome face.

“ She spoke little of her past sorrows, only that, after a long and painful absence, she was returning to Glen cottage in B——, the place of her nativity.

“ ‘ B—— ? ’ I inquired. ‘ Is not Willow Dale and Heatherton Hall in that vicinity ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, yes ! ’ she answered. ‘ I know their locality well. Many times, in my childish days, I visited the old

hall, and played "hide and go seek" in its parks and pleasure-grounds.'

" 'Then,' I answered, 'this is a double pleasure; and how strange, indeed, that we have never spoken to each other in our former acquaintance of Heatherton Hall, for I am designing to visit it, and perhaps spend a few weeks with my lone old aunt, if I find her not too eccentric to claim relationship with such a wild specimen of humanity.'

" 'My heart yearns to revel in those old halls, bereft of their former magnificence. To pore over the musty parchments penned by my venerable ancestors in the days of "long ago." To dream away the long summer days within the shades of its grand old park, and listen, in the mellow moonlight, to the legends and love adventures of that lone old aunt in the days of her beauty and bloom.'

" A faint smile passed over the pale, sad features of my companion, while she answered :

" 'You will find your lone old aunt, as you are pleased to designate her, any thing but an imbecile, love-stricken dame, mourning over the disappointments of blighted or faithless love in the days of her youth.'

" 'She is one of nature's specimens of nobility; for she needs no airs or embellishments to perfect her genuine worth. There are few so pure, so good, and spiritually inclined, as to comprehend her; and therefore she is called eccentric.'

“I was pleased with the praise, which I knew was no flattery, paid to my worthy relative ; and by every act of kindness, both to Effie and her child, I strove to convince her how much I appreciated it.

“Thus each day of our journey and companionship had passed in pleasant and friendly intercourse, till at last, as the shades of evening were closing around us on the third day, we drew near to the place of our destination.

“My own heart, bounding with hopeful expectancy, hers growing sadder from the dark forebodings and fearful apprehensions which closed around her, like the impenetrable misty fog from the adjacent bay.

“I had indulged in a pleasant reverie, but aroused myself as we merged from the forest-road into the broad, open space of cultivated mainland.

“Lights were glimmering through the misty fog in the dim distance, and while my companion was wiping away the blinding tears from her eyes, attracted by my glad-some exclamations, the driver reined in the panting horses with a prolonged ‘w-h-o-a,’ in front of a massive gate and a venerable looking mansion, which appeared to me like some long-preserved relic of antiquity, so singular was it in appearance and construction.

“‘Oh, yes!’ said Effie, grasping my hand frantically, ‘here we are, at dear Heath Hall, and Glen Cottage is only a few miles beyond. It is with heart-felt regret that I must leave you, Kate. But may I indulge in the

hope that we shall meet again while you remain at the hall ?’

“ ‘Indeed you may, Effie dear,’ I answered, encouragingly ; ‘and many, many times I hope we shall meet again, when these dark clouds of sorrow have all disappeared, and the sunlight of happiness and prosperity rests smilingly upon your life-path.’ ”

“ Her burning lips trembled for a moment upon my hand, while they murmured a low ‘God bless you, Kate,’ and a sad ‘good-night.’ ”



CHAPTER XXII.

KATE'S ARRIVAL AT THE OLD HALL.—THE COACHMAN THINKS SHE IS FROM THE SOUTHWARD, AND MISTAKES HER BAGGAGE FOR LOG CABINS.—AUNT HEATHERTON'S CORDIAL GREETING.—KATE'S FEARS AND PLEASANT SURPRISE.—HER MOTHER'S BRIDAL CHAMBER.—THE FAMILY PORTRAITS.

“‘**T**HIS IS Heath Hall, marm,’ said the driver, throwing open the stage door with a most obsequious air and profound bow, at the same time offering his hand to assist me in alighting.

“He conducted me through the ponderous gate up a broad avenue, thickly shaded on either side by the drooping and swaying branches of the graceful willow, to the low porch, where the sweetbrier and roses mingled with the climbing woodbine.

“‘And this,’ I whispered, half audibly, ‘is Heatherton Hall;’ for I scarcely knew whether, in one of my wild, dreamy reveries, I was wandering in fairy-land, or whether indeed I had arrived at Willow Dale.

“‘Yes, marm,’ answered the driver, at the same time giving the ponderous knocker a clang which might have aroused the inhabitants of “Sleepy Hollow,” ‘and it

is the best farm in all the eastern country. Why, a man and a boy could make a fortin here in less than no time. Dick Joslin, the chore-boy, says that the old lady lays up heaps of money every year, and not a child nor a chick to fight for it, before she is fairly under the sod.

“ ‘ But one thing I know, that nobody ever goes away from Heath Hall hungry and cold ; and you will know it too, marm, if you make much of a tarry at Willow Dale.

“ ‘ Here, Dick,’ he continued, as a little dumpy form came blustering through the long hall, or outer entrance, holding cautiously before him a lighted lantern.

“ ‘ Here, Dick, is a woman come to stop with you a spell, I reckon. And I should think that she was from the southard, by the little log cabins she takes her luggage in. The deuce take me, if I ever carried the like before.

“ ‘ Come, Dick, lend us a good stout hand, and we will soon have it stored away in this old castle ; and the woman too, I reckon, for she has journeyed a heap of a ways, and will be right glad to find such a resting-place as Heath Hall and Willow Dale.’

“ I thanked the driver for his kind solicitations, and placing within his hand an extra quarter as a compensation for the transportation of my log cabins, which, he declared, ‘ was quite unnecessary, as I was entirely welcome.’ I informed him that, although I had travelled in the southern States, I was neither a native or resident of the South.

“ ‘ Oh ! I beg your pardon, marm, if I have offended you ; I meant no insult, only the log cabins, marm, looked a leetle suspicious.’ ”

“ ‘ This way, Miss,’ said Dick, throwing open an inner door, which led to a well-lighted and comfortable-looking apartment.

“ ‘ This way a moment, if you please, Miss, while I assist the coachman in removing your baggage, and then I will conduct you to the mistress of the mansion and more commodious entertainment.’ ”

“ I entered the room designated, which, on closer observation, proved not a private apartment, but a large hall, opening from the front, or main entrance of the spacious building.

“ It was hung with pictures of old and rare beauty, and ancient-looking portraits which I knew must be the representations of my own relatives, whose blood was even then dancing lightly with the wild throbbings of my heart and brain.

“ There was the painted armor of their own brave warriors ; the coat of arms and heraldry, denoting their nobility and high station in the land of their ancestors.

“ The lion was still erect in his proud strength and glory. The arm and battle-axe raised dauntlessly and defiantly high, as if to crush, with one fell swoop, all who dared to oppose their just and honorable rights:

“ The eagle soared far up toward the mid-day sun,

gracefully poising the green laurel and the quivering arrows, with neck proudly curved, looking down from his lofty eyry.

“Pride was beginning to blow its empty bubbles amidst the wild throbbings of my heart; and my brain, oh, that seemed inflated almost to bursting with the light, gassy vanity which had pressed in through its unguarded port-holes, as I looked, half bewildered, upon the honorable heraldry of my noble ancestors. And I ejaculated, half unconsciously, ‘I am a regular and legitimate descendant from that ancient house.’

“Fears came next, with torturing suspense. ‘For how,’ I thought, ‘shall I be able to meet the majestic woman who presides here, a living representative of their former magnificence?’

“Light footsteps and the soft rustling of summer garments aroused me.

“I turned quickly, half in awe, half in surprise, which soon gave place to admiration and pleasure.

“For instead of a proud, majestic woman, whom no one would dare to approach, was a little, plain, unassuming figure, with one of the sweetest faces and the mildest blue eyes which I have ever had the pleasure of beholding.

“Her hair was combed neatly back from a broad, intellectual brow, half shaded by a trim little cap of the most delicate texture, while a kerchief of the same material, white as the spotless snow-flake, was laid in careful

folds over a well-formed bust, giving a pleasing contrast to the dress of brown silk which fell gracefully around her neat and petite form.

“She approached me with her small white hand cordially extended, and a smile of welcome, which radiated every feature, saying, as she did so, ‘I was not aware of the arrival of visitors, or they should not have been so unceremoniously received at Heatherton Hall. I hope, my dear,’ she continued, taking my hand affectionately within her own, ‘that you will allow me to make amends for any seeming neglect of duty on the part of my attendants.’

“‘No neglect is attributed to them, my dear madam,’ I answered, ‘for having, by stage, just a moment since arrived at the hall, your servant led me to this apartment, while he assisted the coachman, who is impatient of delay, in removing my baggage.

“‘And I can assure you I have been very agreeably and pleasantly entertained,’ I continued, casting my eyes significantly upon the portraits which gave a life-like appearance to that spacious apartment.

“‘And you,’ she said, scanning my features with an expression of deep and earnest interest, ‘you are a Heatherton. I ought to have known as much from the first glance.’

“‘My mother was a Heatherton; and although I feel

the blood of my proud ancestors dancing through my veins, yet I claim not the honor of their ancient name.'

" 'And yet you are a Heatherton,' she replied, leading me close to a portrait which before I had but dimly observed.

" 'Look upon that,' she continued, 'and then tell me you are not a Heatherton.

" 'You do not know him, for he died before your birth, and before your mother, with her young family, moved far away from Willow Dale.

" 'She has never returned to us since. But you are her second self, and the exact counterpart in features and expression of the life-like portrait before you. He was my brother and your mother's father.'

" I stood transfixed and spell-bound to the spot; for a feeling of awe came over me, as I looked for the first time upon the likeness of one whom my mother had loved and revered so much, my grandfather, who long ago had passed triumphantly to the spirit-world.

" 'Yes,' she continued, half musingly, 'he was the father of our dear little Kate, our household pet, as we used to call her. Oh! how gleefully her bird-like voice rang through these spacious apartments! How sylph-like seemed her form, chasing the shadows and the sunshine beneath the ancient elms. How radiant her face with beauty, innocence, and love!

“ ‘ But her father died, or rather passed to a higher and purer life ; and she, oh, she left us too ; and since then a hushed desolation has pervaded both hall and bower.

“ ‘ Come with me to her bridal chamber, her dressing-room, her laboratory, her music-room, and to-morrow I will lead you beneath the shadow of the trees her own hands planted. I will show you her favorite walks, by the Hawthorn Hedge, and up the steep cliffs, her mossy nooks, her sunny dells, and — and ——

“ ‘ Here the voices of Dick and the coachman, shuffling through the outer hall with the suspicious log cabins, broke in upon her enthusiasm, and, winding an arm affectionately around my waist, she continued, ‘ or rather, let me lead you to a place of refreshment and repose.

“ ‘ I had forgotten, in the surprise and pleasure of meeting one of my own kindred, that you were a weary traveller, and would be more agreeably entertained with a good supper and an easy-chair than you would by climbing steep cliffs, or threading hawthorn hedges and mossy dells.

“ ‘ You will remain long with us, I hope, and will have ample time to make yourself familiar with all the scenes your mother, in her happy girlhood, loved so well.’ ”

CHAPTER XXIII.

KATE IN THE ANCESTRAL CHAIR. — HER VISION. — IS TAKEN FOR
A RAPPING MEDIUM. — HER AUNT'S HORROR OF SPIRITUAL-
ISTS. — KATE'S FUN-LOVING SPIRIT AROUSED.

“SHE LED me into a large, airy reception-room, furnished in a style of antique beauty, and, after removing my travelling apparel, seated me in a spacious arm-chair, not of modern structure, but which, I imagined, might have taken passage in the memorable ‘May Flower,’ or, further back, might have graced the drawing-room of some ducal palace in merry England or bonny Scotia.

“Be that as it may, I remained half buried in the soft crimson cushion, while my good aunt excused herself to order tea and refreshments, with my thoughts flitting far, far back through the shadowy vistas of olden times, when my grandfather’s sire, with the firm, proud step of early manhood, strode through those halls, with a sweet, beautiful bride leaning trustingly upon his manly arm, listening, half entranced with the bright halo of love which encircled her, to the endearing words which fell like costly pearls from his truthful lips.

“And then scene after scene presented itself to my view as the years sped on, and the proud man’s step became enfeebled by age, and the fair young bride, changed to a dignified matron, are quietly passing adown life’s shady side; while others, in the full noon-day of youth, are twining their brows with the laurels and honors laid aside by their predecessors.

“And then again the bright scene changes; and youth and beauty pass away into the twilight of years.

“The song and gleeful laugh of happy childhood awake no longer an answering echo through the long corridors and high-arched walls of that ancient home.

“The laurels are laid aside, or gathered up as sacred mementos of other days. A pall-like darkness gathers around the scene a hushed desolation, and ——

“‘Oh, how weary you are,’ said the soft voice of my aunt, bending over me with a look of the deepest anxiety depicted upon her mild face.

“‘You have been dreaming too, and it was with quite an effort that I awoke you sufficiently to tell you that my tea is ready, which announcement, I think, you will not regret to hear.’

“‘Dreaming? Why, my dear aunt, I have not been asleep since you left me to rest in this luxuriant arm-chair; only indulging in one of the trance-like reveries which steal over me now and then, like spirit-inspiration.’

“‘Why, child,’ said my aunt, while her mild blue

eyes opened wide upon me, with an expression of doubtful perplexity spreading all over her still handsome face, 'you are not one of those awful spiritualists, are you, who set the tables to talking, and the chairs to dancing Yankee reels all over a respectable body's house; setting our arms akimbo, and making us commit all manner of improprieties; exposing even our very thoughts to the wide glare of an uncharitable world? I have heard of them, but I never thought that I should be tor—tormen——, I never thought one would find its way into Heath Hall.

“ ‘They say if they once get into a house, that it is hard to get them out again; because ——’

“ ‘Here my mirthfulness could endure no more, and it broke out into a loud, ringing, prolonged laugh, which woke once again the slumbering echoes of old Heath Hall.

“ ‘O you rogue!’ she said, twining her arms affectionately around my waist. ‘I know now that you are not one of them, or you could not laugh like that. And so much like hers, like Kate’s.

“ ‘Oh, yes; your laugh, your face, yourself, will bring her back again as erst to me, and we shall live over the happy scenes of other days.’

“ ‘But my dear aunt,’ I replied, while another laugh of mirthfulness convulsed my whole frame, and reverberated once again through those spacious apartments, ‘I am indeed a believer in spirits.

“ ‘I believe in spirit-inspiration, in guardian spirits, in ministering spirits, in holy spirits, in evil spirits, and in intoxicating spirits ; but it does not follow that because I believe there are such things, that I am an advocate for them all, or have brought them as unwelcome guests to Heatherton Hall, to tor—torm——

“ A small hand was pressed lovingly to my lips ; and a laugh, such perhaps as had not agitated her bosom for years, broke through the parted lips of my demure little aunt.

“ ‘ Oh, you are a little witch ! and have brought a happy spirit and the spirit of mirthfulness to your lone aunt and her desolate home ; and long may it be before an evil spirit tempts me to eject them from old Heath Hall.

“ ‘ It was a good spirit that sent you here, I know,’ she continued, as we seated ourselves at her daintily spread table.

“ ‘ And so I think we shall not quarrel about spirits, nor be troubled with table-talking, or chair-dancing, only when your spirit of mirthfulness and mischief predominates.’

“ ‘ Which perhaps you will find too often for the staid customs and habits of Willow Dale,’ I replied, casting a sidelong glance over the knob of the silver tea-urn, from which she was pouring the delicious beverage.

“ ‘ Not at all,’ she answered. ‘ Be yourself, mischief,

mirthfulness, and all; and though it may sometimes break in upon the staid old habits — and I can assure you they are nothing but habits, — habits acquired by loneliness and desolation; yet they will be to us like the breaking of sunshine through the dark storm-cloud; or a refreshing shower-bath upon the parched and withered flowers of summer's noontide.'

“‘ I thank you, my good aunt, for the wide and pleasant scope you are pleased to allow me; for my wild, turbulent spirit never could endure the curb-string.

“‘ And, furthermore, I am a firm believer in the spirit of mirthfulness, and so far secede from the old faith as to believe that mirthfulness maketh the heart better, instead of sadness.'

“‘ Again she opened her eyes wide upon me, while, with an expression of perplexity, she answered :

“‘ Oh, we must believe the Bible, child, every word of it; and that says that sadness maketh the heart better, and that it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting or mirth.

“‘ But, nevertheless, I believe that mirthfulness is, to the heart, like the bright sunshine drifting in playful ripples over the dark ocean. And sadness, like the pearls that lay untarnished and pure among the rough sands and seaweed at its base.'

“‘ No; rather say that sadness is like the dark, tangled seaweed, inclosing in its dank, slimy meshes, the pearls and gems that the ocean tide would otherwise

bring out in bright glittering masses to the wooing sunbeams.

“ ‘Sadness throws a pall-like gloom over every thing. Even the bright sunshine and summer flowers seem shrouded in its misty twilight.

“ ‘Nature’s sweet songs, from woodland and dell, grate harshly upon the senses, like mournful dirges from the tombs of the dead.

“ ‘The soft summer zephyrs which float around me, like the low whisperings of spirit-voices, bring ominous forebodings to the saddened heart.

“ ‘No, aunt ; God never designed us to shroud ourselves in sackcloth and ashes ; to sit down irresistingly beneath the black pall of sadness, religiously believing it was making our hearts better, our lives purer, and the future more perfect, in blissful and holy immortality. That God, who clothes himself with such a halo of bright glory that our mortal vision cannot look upon it, and to which the sun’s rays become like a dark floating cloud.’

“ ‘O aunt,’ I continued, ‘Why did He give us this beautiful world ? These flowers, these trees, these woodland songsters ? The bright luminaries which know their places, and move in a gorgeous galaxy of splendor through the broad and high-arched canopy above us ? And why did He give us souls and aspirations above the beasts of the field, if He designed us to be made better by lives of sadness and gloom.

“ ‘I do not believe that a sad heart ever found its

way through the golden gates of the New Jerusalem, or tuned its lyre before the sapphire throne, in praise to the great Immaculate who sits thereon, clothed in the brightness of beatific holiness.'

" 'Well, there,' said my aunt, interrupting me, 'you are a combination of mystery. One moment a gay, volatile creature; the next soaring far away into the sublimity of the spirit-world.'

" 'Yes, I like that volatility and good sense combined. So, be assured, we shall be the very best friends imaginable while you remain at Willow Dale.'

" 'And now, my dear, tell me all about your mother, your home, and every thing of interest connected with it. For it is many a year ago that she left this old hall to the loneliness and desolation which you now find it.'

" 'Oh! it is just the place of all the world, aunt,' I said, 'where I could dream away a life-time in bright, fanciful reveries, weaving the most beautiful fabrics of romance from the woof of real life; combining light and shade, beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice, wealth and want, honor and degradation, life and death, the music of mirth, and the wailing of despair.'

" 'Oh, how many bright reveries would flit around me, till Heatherton Hall would become an enchanted castle, and Willow Dale the resort of fairy revellers.'

" 'Dear aunt, I fear that you will have to awake me from many a day-dream while I remain at Willow Dale your happy guest.'

“ ‘That I will do with pleasure,’ said my aunt, laughingly, ‘only be careful and keep away from the trance-influence. Because, you know, that I have a great horror of these spirit-revellers playing their wild freaks in my staid old home.’ ”

“ ‘I will take good care that they commit no serious depredations upon any thing connected with Heath Hall.

“ ‘And now, my good aunt,’ I continued, as I arose from the table, and once more seated myself in the luxurious arm-chair, ‘I will spend the remainder of the evening in narrations of my mother and my home, as far back as the gladsome days of my own early childhood. Previous to that I have no distinct recollection.’ ”

“ ‘Never mind the previous,’ said my aunt, laughingly, ‘that relation belongs to myself; and to-morrow, as I show you the objects of interest connected with Heatherton Hall and Willow Dale, I will give you a recital of all which occurred previous to your mother’s departure from our dear old home.’ ”



CHAPTER XXIV.

KATE'S WILD FREAKS.—HER AUNT'S HISTORY OF THE LEES.—
HER PREDICTION VERIFIED.—PLANNING A VISIT TO EFFIE.

“I HAD spent nearly a whole week at the hall in a wild, restless, dreamy state, scarcely giving a moment's thought to aught else than the objects of interest which everywhere presented themselves in that ancient home.

“I had plunged into every nook and corner; overturning, in my reckless love of adventure, the contents of old closets, explored dark attics, and poured over musty old volumes, manuscripts, and parchments; sketched upon canvas the outlines of the old mansion, and its surroundings; frightened away the owls and bats from the decaying turrets; threaded all the sheep-tracks and avenues in Willow Dale; tired out the favorite donkey, in my wild flights over the adjacent hills and forest roads; swamped Dick's best canoe in a fruitless duck-chase over the little lake; sent all the poultry, screeching and cackling, from the barn-yard; laughed myself into convulsions every time I made an attempt with a milking

stool, to see the cows run bellowing and kicking, with tails poised high in the air, upsetting, in their wild fright, milk-maids and milk-pails, in an attempt to scale the five-rail fence, breaking the chain of the recreant wether, and sending him, in a choking condition, over a tottering stone-wall; treating the pigs now and then with a delicious morsel from my aunt's best cream-can, or letting them out into the rich pea-patch, just for a little exercise and airing; and then, as demure as an Irish servant-girl with her swate-heart behind the door, I would seek the mistress herself, with ample acknowledgments for the mischief I had done, and a thousand lip-promises to keep the future peace, if only then she would grant me the pardoning kiss.

“Half weary with my wild freaks, I sat me down upon a low stool beside my aunt, and rested my head upon her lap, striving to conjecture some exciting scheme for the morrow, when the thought of Effie, and the promise I made to visit her, occurred to me.

“‘I have it now, aunty,’ I said. ‘A pleasant excursion for to-morrow in view. I declare I have been so fascinated with the beauties and exciting scenes of Willow Dale and this antique home, that I really forgot to tell you who was my travelling companion in the last three days of my journey to Heatherton Hall.

“‘Do you know such a place as Glen Cottage, aunty?’

“‘Aye, indeed I do; and many a time I have wept

there with the bereaved ones, when death has entered and borne away one after another from that happy band. And many's the time too, that he has entered there an unwelcome guest.'

" ' Yes, aunty ; and yet one remains, sad, broken-hearted, and alone. And she it was who bore me company the last three days of my journey here ; a blighted, broken-hearted, desolate thing.

" ' Oh ! why did death spare her, when she has prayed so oft and so earnestly for the boon which it alone can give.'

" ' God, my child, controls the destinies of men. His ways are not as our ways, and are often dark and mysterious to us ; and we, creatures of the dust, comprehend Him not.

" ' If He has spared one member of the band which nestled so lovingly together beneath that humble roof, it has, doubtless, been for some good purpose which we knew not of.

" ' But tell me ; has Effie Lee returned once more to her childhood's home, and so desolate and broken-hearted ?

" ' But I predicted it when I heard of her marrying that handsome stranger in the Spindle City.

" ' Oh ! she was so unsuspecting, so confiding, so pure and good, that she saw no guile lurking beneath his handsome features. And so, now, he has deserted her. Poor Effie !

“ ‘O aunty,’ I said, pleadingly, ‘do tell me all about the Lees and Glen Cottage; for they sound so pretty, that I really do desire a sketch for her friend, Rosa Lynd, to grace a novel.’

“ ‘I fear, my child, that my story of Glen Cottage and the Lees will savor too much of sadness for your volatile spirit. For you know how much you dislike dark life-pictures.’

“ ‘Just this once,’ I pleaded, ‘and I will be sure to find some sunbeams amongst the dark storm-clouds.’

“ ‘Well, then,’ she answered, ‘it is useless to say no to you. But where shall I begin? Far, far aback in olden time? Or—ah, yes! I will tell you how the Lees first came to Glen Cottage.’

“ ‘I know that your sympathies will be aroused many times in my recital; but remember, that you must keep in subjection all these emotions until the conclusion, for you know that I am not fond of interruptions in the shape of interrogations, exclamations, or ejaculations, in the midst of an interesting yarn.’

“ ‘I laid my head gently and quietly upon her lap, in token of my acquiescence, elated with the prospect of a rich entertainment for the evening, and pleasant excursion for the morrow.’

“ ‘Well do I remember the time,’ commenced my aunt, ‘when the Lees first took possession of Glen Cottage. It was mid-winter; and such a storm of snow and

wind as scarcely ever sweeps over the rocky coast of this eastern State.

“ ‘ Mr. Lee was a native of B —— ; but his wee bonnie wife had come many a mile from her childhood’s home.

“ ‘ She was only seventeen when Mr. Lee, on a tour through her native town, met, wooed, and won the love of the gentle, beautiful, and accomplished Effie Landon.

“ ‘ Every wish of her young life had been gratified. She had known no care ; felt no lack of idolatrous love from her doating parents ; knew no deprivation in aught that could make her life one of perpetual sunshine and flowers. And when, on her eighteenth birth-day, she laid her hand within that of the handsome and gentlemanly George Lee, and all so trustingly gave her life-happiness to his keeping, no apprehensions, no misgivings or presentiments of ill laid like dark shadows over the sunny future which her glowing imagery portrayed.

“ ‘ She had known no sorrow, why should she fear any ? She was the youngest, the household pet. And now, oh now, what would she more than be the heart’s chosen of that idol one.

“ ‘ He bore her away to a distant town, where he had already established himself in a very respectable mechanical business. And, being a superior workman, was soon on the high road to wealth and an elevated position in the world.

“ ‘ His little wife was very happy, for she felt no lack

of the ardent love pledged to her in her happy girlhood. And oft, though one after another came in helpless infancy to claim a mother's love, yet she retained her beauty and elasticity, only grown a little more matronly and dignified, from the position which she held in her love-lit home.'

"And then my aunt continued her relation of their misfortunes and bereavements until the time of Effie's departure, to join her brother in the distant town of A——; all of which I knew that Effie had told you when we were room-mates at No. 10, in the busy Spindle City.

"And so she has returned to us again, poor thing, continued my aunt, as she concluded her recital, 'and doubly desolate now.'

"Yes, we will go to her to-morrow; we will comfort her, and offer to her the consolation which only a true friend can bestow.'

"And I shall learn her history too, aunty,' I said, 'in addition to the one you have been relating. But it is all so sad. I had indeed hoped for a happier finale to this little sketch; but I have not much to hope for in Effie's story.'

"Not much, I fear,' my aunt replied, 'in her past history. But Effie's sunbeams may yet be behind the dark storm-clouds; and even now, perhaps, some gentle zephyr is looping back the heavy folds, that its undimmed radiance may light up the dark chambers of her desolate

heart. Effie has seen little save the shady side of life ; but the resplendent noonday may be before her and its gorgeous decline.'

" ' Yes, dear aunt,' I replied, ' but that is only in perspective uncertainty. I would to God it might be otherwise ; but I fear, that as the dawning, so will also be life's desolate and drear decline.'

" ' Not so I,' said my aunt, hopefully. ' A prophetic inspiration seems to whisper that her day-star of happiness and prosperity is dawning for an unclouded, resplendent morrow.' "



CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE WAY TO GLEN COTTAGE. — THE TOMB OF THE HEATHER-TON'S. — EFFIE FOUND SENSELESS UPON HER MOTHER'S GRAVE. — LITTLE CHARLEY JOYFULLY RECOGNIZES KATE. — EFFIE RESTORED TO CONSCIOUSNESS. — AUNT HEATHERTON THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

“ ‘**W**OULD YOU like to stop here a few moments?’ inquired my aunt, as we neared the entrance to a public burial-ground, on our way to Glen Cottage, the following morning. ‘Perhaps you would like to look at our family tomb, and also see the enclosure where the Lees are at last peacefully reposing.’

“ ‘Oh yes, indeed I should,’ I answered, ‘for it will add much, though sad it be, to the interest which their history has already excited within my mind. And I am anxious also to see the tomb where repose my honored ancestors.’

“The morning air was fresh and balmy, the walk invigorating through the broad avenues, on either side where the rich flowers of summer were lifting their smiling, dew-spangled petals to the morning sunbeams.

“We entered the enclosure of the dead; and as we

passed along through the shadowy aisles, we saw much, both of modern improvement and decaying antiquity, to excite our interest and admiration.

“And one little grave I noticed in particular, as we passed up the gravelled walk, with a plain white stone, upon which was inscribed upon the chiselled scroll, ‘Lilla.’

“I looked inquiringly at my aunt, who replied: ‘That Lilla had been the family pet of a very dear friend. But death had claimed her, and there she lay, where the sweetest flowers of summer bloomed over her little grave.’

“Upon it lay the withered boquets, which every morning had been placed there, by a mother’s hand, fresh and fragrant, upon the white marble slab.

“Contiguous to this was a family lot enclosed by a neat white railing, shaded here and there by thick clusters of the cypress and fir-tree, where, amidst the low branches, the rose and sweet-brier mingled their fragrant bloom.

“And in the centre — almost entirely surrounded by mounds reared above the mouldering dead — was a plain white monument, with ‘Lee’ simply inscribed upon the front.

“‘This,’ said my aunt, looking around the enclosure, ‘was John’s last work, before his final leave-taking from his native home. His mother’s grave was the last one which was added to the many which you here observe;

and there it is,' she continued, pointing to a mossy mound, beneath the deep shade of clustering evergreens.

"At that instant, the half sad, half gladsome accents of a childish voice, rang out from the cypress shade to which my aunt had directed my attention. And, peering cautiously through the thick umbrage, lest I might disturb the tributary devotions of some recently bereaved mourner, a sight met my vision which almost paralyzed my brain, and sent the warm life-blood sluggishly back through the chilled fibres of my healthful frame.

"Can it be,' I exclaimed, springing impulsively forward to the prostrate form beside that mother's grave, 'can it be, Effie, that I meet you here and thus?'

"Effie! Effie! did you say?' ejaculated my aunt, with surprise, quickly approaching the spot, and anxiously kneeling down beside the pale, rigid face pillowed upon that mother's grave.

"This, surely, is not Effie Lee!' said my aunt, carefully scanning the sharp features of that pale, emaciated face. 'No, no; you are mistaken,' she continued, looking half doubtingly, half inquiringly at me.

"She was my stage-coach companion,' I answered, 'and the Effie Lee of my Spindle City acquaintance. Poor Effie!' I whispered, bending tearfully over her, 'would to God that I could avert the stern mandates of thy cruel fate.'

"Mamma cry; mamma sleep,' said little Charley,

with childlike simplicity, laying his little dimpled hand with shy confidence upon my tear-drenched cheek. Then, nestling closer to his mother's side, he kissed the blue, pulseless temples and rigid cheek, and coaxingly whispered, 'Wake up, mamma, Charley be good, Charley love oo; lady here, mamma.' And he kissed again and again the cold white lips, rigid as death to the warm pressure of her idol boy.

" 'Better far,' said my aunt, 'were it the sleep that knows no waking, save only that which wakes to spiritual life in the New Jerusalem, where tears, and sorrow, and anguish are known no more forever, and the wicked cease from troubling.

" 'But this poor sufferer,' she continued, raising her head gently from the turf, and chafing the cold temples with her soft, warm palm.

" 'This poor sufferer has not yet thrown off her weary earth-shackles. I feel the sluggish pulses struggling back to life, or rather to a continuation of anguish and desolation.

" 'But I cannot make her Effie, the handsome, hopeful Effie, who amidst smiles and tears, caresses and congratulations, left us to join her brother in a distant town.

" 'But ah!' she continued, 'sorrow and desertion, such as I fear has been Effie's fate, will soon steal away the freshness of beauty and vigor from fair faces and youthful forms.'

“A deep, heavy sob struggled from up the heart-depths, and, with a look of inexpressible anguish, as the pale, thin lids were raised from their swollen sockets, she feebly murmured :

“ ‘ Would to God, my boy, that death would end our sorrows here, within these hallowed shades, where the loved ones of my childhood are silently mouldering.’

“The nerveless hand was laid lovingly upon the soft baby-cheek, which nestled closer and closer to her throbbing bosom.

“ ‘ Effic ! ’ I whispered, pressing my lips to her cold, pale brow.

“ ‘ Mamma ! O mamma ! ’ chimed in the soft voice of little Charley, almost frantic with joy at his mother’s restoration.

“ ‘ Charley do love oo, — oh, so much ! Charley be good, mamma ! and lady come too, mamma. See ! see ! good lady. She won’t let mamma cry, will oo, lady,’ he said, twining his little snowy arms affectionately around my neck with a hopeful, beseeching look in the dark blue eyes, raised in artless simplicity to mine.

“ ‘ No, no ! nor you either, my little cherub,’ I answered, while the hot tears gushed up uncontrollably from my own agitated bosom.

“ ‘ No, darling ; your mother shall not cry again, if the good God will endow me with the power to suppress her tears.’

“ ‘ Come Effie, I said, cheerfully, while I assisted my aunt in raising her from the damp turf, ‘ I have come to see you to-day, and my good aunt is here too.

“ ‘ She is one of the good Samaritans which happen along sometimes, just in the right time, with the soothing balm and healing ointment for the wayfarer’s bleeding wounds; and I’ll warrant me she has some soothing restorative just suited to your own case, dear Effie.

“ ‘ Oh don’t! don’t weep so, you are not the only sufferer in this treacherous world. Look up to the bright sunshine, and around on the smiling flowers, and the earth teeming with beauty and bloom; and see how the lazy breezes float by, laden with the rich nectarine which they gather from shrub and flower.

“ ‘ And then look beyond and away into the future — your future — and see there the bright rainbow of hope, spanning the dark clouds of sorrow, which have passed on and away, leaving undimmed the sunshine and the flowers which are yet to cheer and beautify your life-path.

“ ‘ Oh! I am something of a prophet, I know, and do believe in impressions when they come thus forcibly upon me.’

“ ‘ Oh, my dear friend,’ sobbed Effie, ‘ there is no future for me, save only that of a lone, broken-hearted, and homeless wanderer. All that have truly loved me are there,’ she said, pointing to the mounds beneath the shadow of the evergreens.

“ ‘And all that remains to me is this.’ And she pressed convulsively to her heaving bosom her darling baby-boy, and kissed again and again, with frenzied affection, his fair, uplifted brow.

“ ‘The home of my childhood, where I had hoped to rest, at least for a season, and gather new strength to struggle with the dark waves which dash above and around me with relentless power, is closed unpityingly against me. And the only shelter for me and my babe, in the wide world, is the evergreens which chant their mournful dirges above my parents’ graves.’ ”



CHAPTER XXVI.

EFFIE DENIED REPOSE IN GLEN COTTAGE. — AUNT HEATHERTON'S
BALM. — THE NEW HOME.

“ ‘**E**FFIE! tell me truly,’ said my aunt, bending eagerly forward, with a flush of indignation overspreading her usually mild features, ‘has Mary Ashton turned coldly away from you in your sorrows, and closed the doors of Glen Cottage to you and your helpless babe?’ ”

“ ‘It is even so, my dear Miss Heatherton, and I have learned, oh, how bitterly! that friendship seldom outlives prosperity. And love is only a byword on the lips of wealthy sycophants.’ ”

“ ‘Such is too often the case, I will admit,’ answered my aunt, thoughtfully, ‘But there are a few exceptions, Effie; and I will prove to you the truthfulness of my assertions.’ ”

“ ‘Come with me, Effie; there is room enough yet in my heart for you, and in the old hall too; and many a room there is, drear and desolate enough, for the want of an occupant or two to break the monotony of its death-like stillness.’ ”

“ ‘Come Effie, baby and all; and when the doors of Heatherton Hall are closed against you, then may you say that love is an illusion and friendship a crouching menial to prosperity and wealth.’

“ ‘There!’ I exclaimed, springing impulsively to my feet, and in my wild, frantic joy half raising her nerveless, trembling form from the low turf.

“ ‘There, Effie! did I not tell you that the good Samaritan had come with a soothing restorative just suited to your need? And I am sure, we shall all be so glad to have you with us. And you will grow beautiful, blooming, healthful, and happy again, under my dear good aunty’s kind supervision.

“ ‘And we will ride and walk and sing together, and talk away the long summer twilights, and play hide-and-go-seek with Charley and the flitting moonbeams beneath the willow boughs, and explore every chink and cranny in the old hall, every nook and mouse-bed in the old park, and frighten away, in our weird revellings, all the owls, bats, and croaking ravens from Willow Dale, and send all the blue imps to the shadowy regions of oblivion.

“ ‘And little Charley shall dance and shout and romp to his heart’s content, and chase the pigs over the pea-patch, and the hens into the frog-pond, the ducks through the flower-beds, and the turkeys into the pantry, and, oh! such times as we will have at Willow Dale and the old hall; worth all the tears, and heart-aches, and false

friends, and treacherous foes, and fawning sycophants in Christendom. And ——’

“ ‘And,’ said the gentle voice of good Aunt Heather-ton, ‘the old horse is panting beneath the scorching rays of the summer sun, patiently waiting our return.

“ ‘The carriage is waiting, and ample enough to take us all back to old Heatherton. So we will just assist Effie to the most comfortable seat it contains, and I will sit by her side, while you and Charley drive back to Willow Dale.

“ ‘I am going to take you to the old hall now, Effie,’ said my aunt, after we were all comfortably seated in the old-fashioned vehicle.

“ ‘And never again, while I live, and a shingle clatters upon its venerable roof, shall you go out a homeless wanderer into the cruel, uncharitable world.

“ ‘Not a word of thanks, Effie ; and just, if you please, brush away those tear-drops too, for you have wept enough for one life-time already, I should judge, from your faded eyes and the tear-channels adown your sunken cheeks. No, Effie, not a word of thanks. I am the obliged party. You don’t know how selfish I have grown in all these long years of your absence, and my home has grown desolate too, and I have sighed for just such companionship, just such sympathy, as yours ; just such music as that little artless Charley can make

through the deep stillness, which all these years have been unbroken in the spacious rooms of Heatherton Hall.

“ Oh ! I am so glad to have you with me, Effie, for this little mad-cap niece of mine will soon flit away to her own home-nest, and then, were it not for you and Charley, we should sink back into our former dull, monotonous, quiet way of living. Oh ! no thanks, Effie ; only do me the favor to accept a home and protection in Heatherton Hall, and we shall all be benefited and the happier for your acquiescence to our propositions.’

“ Effie answered not, for she was weeping tears of gratitude upon the bosom of dear Aunt Heatherton.

“ And little Charley was gleefully clapping his hands at the nimble squirrels and timid hares, which the sound of our carriage wheels had frightened away from their nut-cracking felicity, to seek the protection of the thick umbrage or moss-nooks which lay along the shady woodland.”



CHAPTER XXVII.

EFFIE IN HEATHERTON HALL. — HER PROSTRATION AND RECOVERY.
— GIVING A HISTORY OF HER LOVE AND DESERTION.

“IT WAS a glorious evening in early autumn ; for the broad harvest-moon was throwing a hallowed radiance over the quiet scenes of Willow Dale, bathing in a flood of golden beauty the adjacent hill-tops, tinging here and there with a deeper, richer hue, the varied autumn foliage of tree and shrub.

“ Effie, pale and languid, entered the cozy little drawing-room, and seated herself in the luxuriant arm-chair, which my aunt had placed for her beside a window commanding a view of this gorgeous and varied beauty.

“ It was the first evening, since her arrival at the hall, that she had been able to join us in our social circle.

“ Three weeks she had been prostrated by illness contracted by the sufferings from exposure, as also the nervous and mental excitements caused by her heartless persecutors.

“ And then when relief did come, in the soft, soothing sympathy of real, unfeigned, and truthful friendship, the

reaction was so great, from the very depths of hopeless despair to the warm sympathy of truthful affection and ready relief which she found in my Aunt Heatherton's home of plenty, that it produced a severe nervous inability, which prostrated her, for weeks, a helpless invalid, after her arrival at the hall.

"But now she had nearly recovered, only still weak and emaciated, from her previous sufferings.

"And as this was to be the last evening I designed to spend at the hall, she had made an effort to join us in the cosy little parlor; and, by my aunt's kindly and urgent request, who had informed her that I was anxious to have her relate to me some of the incidents which had occurred in her eventful life since her bridal leave-taking from the Spindle City.

" 'I have but few bright pictures to present to you in my narrations of real life,' she said, after we had all gathered around her in a listening attitude.

" 'But sometimes a shadowy landscape or sunset view is interesting to a distant observer. And as you have never been affected by the sorrows and sufferings through which I have passed, perhaps my narration may not be without interest to you.

" 'You are acquainted with my history previous to my bridal, and I have only to commence at the old parsonage away in the Spindle City, and close at Heath Hall, with the golden harvest moon, laying like a broad

sheet of molten lava upon the beautiful landscape before us.

“ ‘ When I left the old parsonage on my bridal morn, I accompanied my husband to the home he had provided for my reception, in a thriving little village near the eastern boundary of my native State, on the provincial line.

“ ‘ It was an humble cottage to be sure, but then it sufficed for our present need ; and my heart was bounding with bright hopes and joyous anticipations of future bliss and prosperity with my heart’s chosen.

“ ‘ And then my glowing imagination formed many little improvements in my cottage home, and laid plans for my nimble fingers and refined taste to make it so fairy-like, so beautiful with woodbines, and roses, and morning-glories, and daisies, and dew-drops, and fragrant shrubs, and graceful shade-trees ; with walks, and fountains, and arbors ; with mossy slopes and sunny daisy-patches.

“ ‘ And within, how my nimble fingers should beautify the walls with paintings and sketches and needle-work, and fill the vases with the delicate wax-flowers of my own creating.

“ ‘ And then the lounges and easy-chairs and ottomans my busy fingers would manufacture for real home comfort. Oh, I was never weary in devising some additional comfort or decoration for our little domain.

“‘ And then, like an artless child, I would sit upon my husband’s knee, and twine my arms affectionately around his neck, and while I bathed his cheek and brow with warm kisses from my truthful lips, my heart would throb, oh, so wildly, for one word of commendation and praise for my little achievements in those household comforts and decorations.

“‘ But he never seemed to express, either by word or look, any appreciation of my efforts to please. Only half in earnest, half in jest, he would answer my beseeching look, with — “Ha! that’s what I married you for, to make my home comfortable, cook my dinners, repair my wardrobe, and take care of the babies.”

“‘ Oh, how often my heart ached in those first years of our wedded life with disappointment, and yearned for sympathy, the sympathy of a heart congenial with my own.

“‘ But I was away amongst strangers, in a strange land, and my husband all the world, and dearer than life to me.

“‘ And oh, how ardently I hoped and prayed that he would yet understand my sensitive and childlike nature, and stoop a little from his lofty, matter-of-fact position, to the simplicity of my own idolatrous and undivided affection.

“‘ The truthfulness of his love I had never doubted, although much of his time was spent with his former

associates, and many of them of doubtful reputation, while I remained at home to cook his dinners, and, as he termed it, "look after the babies." My home was the dearest place to me in the wide world, and had it been hallowed by my husband's love, as my own, it would have been to us an Eden of bliss, and uninterrupted felicity.

"One year I had been a wife when my little Charley was born; and with almost frantic joy I clasped him to my bosom, and prayed, in the first outgushings of my maternal bliss, that he might be the link to bind us more firmly and lovingly together, and an irresistible attraction to our pleasant, though to him dull and quiet home.

"Charley was a frail, delicate blossom, fading day by day, till at last he lay like a drooping lily, within the pure white folds of his pillowed crib, ready to be borne upon an angel's wings to the heavenly elysium.

"Long weeks of prostration followed, and my home, oh, it seemed enveloped in the same pall-like gloom which shrouded my despairing heart.

"My husband "saw no reason why I should sorrow and mourn for that which I could not help."

"But his matter-of-fact reasonings failed to soothe the anguish and heart-yearnings of a mother's lacerated bosom.

"Oh! how my heart ached for my husband's sympathy. And I wept and prayed upon his bosom for the

love and sympathy a faithful wife should claim and expect from the husband for whom she had left all to share his fate, whether in weal or woe.

“ ‘ But even while I hung upon his neck, pleading in the wild paroxysms of grief for his love and tenderness, he would turn his cold gray eyes upon me, divested of every expression of affection, and say, while he deliberately unclasped from his neck the frantic grasp of my pale, slender fingers :

“ ‘ Did I not tell you long ago that I loved you ? And did I not make you my wife ? What greater proof can any reasonable woman expect or desire of a husband’s love ? ’

“ ‘ And then, without designing to give me the kiss for which my trembling lips were upturned, and for which my tearful eyes pleaded so eloquently, he would turn coldly away, leaving doubly desolate my heart and home.

“ ‘ Oh ! the weary days and nights I have spent in the silence and solitude of my little cot, anxiously waiting and listening for his well-known footfall upon our humble threshold.

“ ‘ And when at last he did come, I would hasten to meet him with all the eagerness of an impatient child, and shower upon him the kisses and caresses which my own idolatrous love and impulsive nature could not resist, and for which my heart turned, oh, so yearningly, for

those life-giving, heart-cheering pledges of unchanging devotion.

“‘But he always received my caresses with a cold, dignified grace, and an expression which seemed to say, —“such is your duty as my wife and mistress of my home. But pshaw! I can’t stoop to such trifling matters. I am a man, and lord of the manor. You must take it for granted that I love you, or you would not long hold the position of wife within Wilton Harriman’s domicile. There is many a one ready to jump into your shoes whenever you desire to lay them aside. So you see you are a free nigger after all, and might, if you would, be a very happy one.”

“‘Such was the language addressed to me on his return from his evening revels or days of absence, till my heart grew sick, and hope fainter and fainter, and scarcely a ray was left to cheer the lonely hours which his absence and cruel desertion produced in our humble home.

“‘For often when he came his step was unsteady, and the fumes of the drunkard’s bowl confirmed to me the sad tales which others had hinted, — that he had been an occasional drinker from a mere lad, and often had dipped a little too freely with his bacchanalian revellers, either for his own good or the happiness and well-being of those who trusted in his love or protection.

“‘Weeks at a time he has left me weak and sick,

with my fragile boy, without assistance or even the luxury of a well-prepared meal and comforts of a good fire. Oh! those days of sadness and privation; how gloomily the recollection of them gathers around me at this moment. And so real too.' ”



CHAPTER XXVIII.

JEFFIE'S FLIGHT FROM HER TREACHEROUS HUSBAND. — IS DENIED
ADMISSION TO THE HOME OF A FORMER FRIEND. — HER RES-
CUE AND RELIEF.

“THE LITTLE patrimony left me by my brother, added to that which my labors had won, which I had so hopefully presented to my husband to aid and encourage him in the commencement of our united efforts, was rapidly disappearing.

“Indeed, our little cottage, instead of being transformed into a larger and more commodious house, as it should have been in all those long years, was already mortgaged for its real value; and the little plats, where my own hands had placed trees and shrubs of ornamental beauty, had been desecrated by strangers' hands, and divested of their bloom and beauty, for the erection of rude out-houses and workshops of inferior construction.

“Oh! how yearningly I pressed my little frail baby-boy to my bosom, and prayed, in the agony of my tortured and bereaved soul, that he might be spared as a life-sustainer to the last tendril of my dying love.

“ ‘He has been spared. But oh ! what agony I have endured for him, and anxiety lest he should be torn from me by a hand more cruel and relentless than death and the grave.

“ ‘I have been deserted by him who should have cherished and protected me ; by him in whom I trusted as sacredly as in the God of heaven.

“ ‘He deserted his home, and spent his time and substance, as did the prodigal son, with harlots and in riotous living. And, spurred on by his evil advisers, the wantons with whom he associated, he sought to bring against me the false accusation of insanity, and to incarcerate me in a lunatic asylum as an excuse to tear my babe from my bleeding bosom, and heartlessly deprive me of the last remaining stimulus to life and hope, for the wantons for whom he had bartered health, honor, happiness, home, and heaven.

“ ‘I gathered up the few remaining keepsakes and trinkets which had been presented me long ago by dear friends, and which I had managed to preserve from the sacrilegious hand of my unfaithful and prodigal husband.

“ ‘I fled secretly with my child to a neighboring town, where resided one who, in the days of my prosperity, had manifested much friendship for me.

“ ‘Many a weary mile I travelled on foot to reach, as I hoped, her friendly and hospitable abode.

“ ‘And when, late at nightfall, I arrived weary and

travel-worn, hoping that there at least I could find safety and rest, she met me with a cold, disdainful air, and spurned me as she would the vilest outcast in the world.

“ ‘ My head grew dizzy from the sudden realities of hopeful trust to hopeless despair, and I sank down in a state of insensibility at the door which had been so inhumanly closed against me.

“ ‘ How long I remained there, I know not. But when I again woke to consciousness, I found myself upon a soft bed, within a home of true benevolence and comfort. A kind neighbor was passing just in time to hear the heartless and foul abuse with which she had denied me admission to her whited sepulchre, “ which ” she persisted in telling me, “ had never yet been polluted by an outcast, or deserter from a faithful husband, and the home he had honored me with.”

“ ‘ He saw me fall senselessly upon the damp turf, and the door close inhumanly against me ; and then he took us to his own home, where humane hearts throbbed around me, and tears of true sympathy fell in behalf of the lone and homeless wanderers.

“ ‘ She who had so inhumanly closed her heart—no, she had no heart—her doors against us, was a model of excellence and vaunted piety ; was at the head of all the benevolent and missionary societies for miles around. She had even headed a list, with a very flattering do-

nation, for the erection of a "widow and orphan asylum" among the Shampeaceso Indians, beyond the Rocky Mountains, in close proximity to the setting of the sun; for which great act of self-denial and benevolence she had been constituted an honorable life-member of that society which her benevolence had founded, by rolling the first great stone into that slough of unheard-of unenlightened heathenism. And for which great act, also, she expected a speedy millennium would follow, as the immediate fruits of her great and world-renowned efforts.

" " In the concert-rooms and prayer-meetings few could go beyond her in her eloquent appeals to the unconverted; and also to the members, generally, for a more zealous interest in behalf of the Shampeacesos toward the setting of the sun.

" " She had even constituted her husband a travelling agent for the free distribution of tracts, to moralize, naturalize, and humbugize the whole human family into one loving knot of brotherhood. And also to solicit donations for the Shampeacesos and the asylum which she had so benevolently founded.

" " It was from her home, which I have designated the whited sepulchre, I was ejected, or rather forbidden to enter with my bleeding heart, weary limbs, and starving babe. And had it not have been for the Christlike benevolence of that humble Sadducee, who worshipped afar off, we might even now have been bleaching upon

the uncovered sod, victims to her uncharitable and heartless cruelty.

“ ‘ With the heavy weight of my former misfortunes, and the almost hopeless despair which closed around me, I made one more effort to struggle out into the world, unaided by any friendly arm, save the arm of God and those who had so kindly sheltered me in those hours of homeless destitution.

“ ‘ And they only who have waded through the deep waters, and beat back alone the angry billows, can know what my sufferings have been.’ ”



CHAPTER XXIX.

EFFIE'S UNEXPECTED MEETING WITH KATE STANTON AT THE
WAYSIDE INN. — THEY JOURNEY TOGETHER. — HER RECEPTION
AT GLEN COTTAGE. — GOING TO COLONIZE THE PEE-WEE
ISLANDS.

“**I** RESOLVED once more to visit the home
of my childhood. And if that was closed against
me, then I would lay me down to die upon the turf,
where my mother's form was peacefully mouldering in
sweet forgetfulness of the life-pangs and sufferings which
she had endured before me.

“ ‘The kind farmer who had taken me in a state of
insensibility from the door of the Shampeacesos' friend,
also generously supplied me with funds to defray my
expenses to Glen Cottage. And his truly Christianlike
wife and amiable daughter made me some necessary
additions to my scanty wardrobe.

“ ‘By taking an early stage, which passed through
their nearest settlement, I hoped to elude the revengeful
vigilance of my faithless husband, and escape with my
child to a place of safety and repose.

“ ‘ Two days I had travelled over a rough and almost unbroken portion of the State, when I met you at the wayside inn. And then three days we were travelling companions, and with many regrets parted beneath the drooping willows of Heatherton Avenue.

“ ‘ Well, I arrived at Glen Cottage and was received with many smiles and pleasant congratulations, flattering indeed to a homeless, friendless wanderer.

“ ‘ And so I choked back, as best as I could, all my own painful emotions, and thankfully laid my aching head and weary limbs once more beneath the humble roof of my own childhood’s home.

“ ‘ The deep heart-rending trials of the past through which I had struggled alone, the long and tedious journey, and the overpowering emotions experienced on once more arriving at my childhood’s home, all proved too much for my shattered mind and frame.

“ ‘ And for three days after my arrival, I lay in a sort of half stupor, half-bewildered state of mind, scarcely recognizing the faces which bent over me, or realizing aught that passed around me.

“ ‘ In those three days I had unconsciously divulged all the painful events which I have here related, only much more minutely, to the occupants of Glen Cottage ; and also the distressing incidents which had driven me there for shelter and relief.

“ ‘ When I had recovered somewhat from that state

of listless bewilderment, and was able to go out of my room and sit in the apartments below, I noticed, with indescribable emotions, that a change had also come over the presiding mistress of that house.

“ ‘She was cold, haughty, and reserved, and finally announced to me that I could only be accommodated at the cottage till I could find a house or lodgings elsewhere. “She felt under no obligations,” she said, “to provide for me a home; because foresooth it had happened once to be in possession of my family. If she acted upon that principle,” she continued, “she should soon have her house full of vagrants, each with a claim as just and absurd as my own. And as for that, she might as well have it at once metamorphosed into a hospital or almshouse, and set her name down on the list with the sisters of the ‘Holy Cross,’ with their cowed monks, priestly confessors, and all that. No, no: she had done enough in her lifetime to aid the poor; and now, for her part, she was going to stop. And if others had a mind to be fools enough to waste their substance and sympathies upon such an unthankful, unappreciative mass of the off-scourings of God’s creation, they might. But for her part, she had done enough; and had even now all but turned herself out of house and home for them, and so for her part she thought it was time to stop. Oh, you needn’t be in such a hurry as this to budge —”

“ ‘ She said, as I arose with trembling steps and almost pulseless heart, to make my hasty preparations to go out again into the wide world, with naught but the uplifted hand of God to shield me from the pending storm-clouds and the scorching sun-rays, “you can stay a day or two longer, till you get pricked up a little from your tiresome jaunt. I haven’t said half that I want to say to you, for I feel it my bounden duty to prevail on you to go back again to your husband. Only think what an awful thing it is, in the sight of a great and holy God, for a wife to desert her home, and the husband whom she has vowed to love, honor, and obey; and especially such as you, who have nowhere else to go, unless you go to the poor-house. Esquire Stoneheart said if many more made application for help, that we should have to charter a colonization ship, and send them away to the Pee-wee Islands or the Ahasuerus Territory. And we should have to send some good missionaries with them, so that they might not grow up like the wild beasts, and forget who made them, and the other good instructions which have been dispensed to them, like the crumbs from the rich man’s table, all free and gratis. It will be a great and glorious undertaking; but if our minister and Esquire Stoneheart say that it must be done, then there will be stout hands and willing hearts to aid in the great enterprise. It will cost heaps of money to set it a-foot, but then when it is done, we shall get the worthless un-

derbrush out from the highway which we have cast up for ourselves to walk in.'

" 'I heard no more of her heartless harangue; for with my child, my little valise, and my broken heart, I left the threshold of my native cot, and wended my way with trembling steps to the cypress shades, which sighed their mournful dirges over the graves of my kindred, who were peacefully mouldering there, unconscious of all my sufferings and utter desolation.

" 'I threw myself upon my mother's grave, and prayed to God to take us — myself and child — away from this wicked and heartless world. And while I prayed, the burden of my grief was so great and overpowering, that I sank into a state of insensibility, from which the voices of true sympathy and kindness which came stealing over my senses, like angel whispers, aroused me.

" 'Yes; I had resolved to remain there with my child, with no other pillow than my mother's grave, beneath the cypress shade, till God in mercy should take us to the mansions which he has promised us in the blissful spirit-world.'

" 'Well, dear Effie,' said good Aunt Heatherton, 'God had not got quite ready to take you yet, and so he constituted me his agent, to take you here to this old home, that you might share with me the bounty which He has so amply strewn around us.

“ ‘ This home, and all pertaining to it, is God’s, not mine. It is only intrusted to me as a dispenser to the suffering and needy. Should I withhold from them what He has intrusted to my keeping, I should be an unfaithful servant in my Master’s vineyard, and no longer worthy of the high mission intrusted to me.

“ ‘ So, Effie, your gratitude is not due to me, but to God. And you may rest yourself easy ; for it shall not only be my home, but thy home, and little Charley’s too, until a better one is prepared for you. And to God only will your obligations be due for the prosperity which may hereafter attend you.’

“ ‘ God be thanked then,’ said Effie, as she threw herself upon the throbbing bosom of her kind benefactress. ‘ God be thanked, then, for sparing unto me one true bosom to weep upon ; for truly light has burst upon me, effulgent and glorious, from out the dark, impenetrable depths of despair.’ ”



CHAPTER XXX.

KATE STANTON'S SOLILOQUY. — THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN. — GOING TO SET A PEG OR TWO LOOSE, TO GIVE THE GREAT WHEEL A JOG THE RIGHT WAY. — AUNT HEATHERTON'S FEARS FOR KATE'S SANITY. — KATE LEAVES HEATHERTON HALL.

“ I AROSE, and proceeded softly to my chamber, lest I might disturb the first gushings of joy which had, perhaps for years, broken through the chilled current of that lone and persecuted heart.

“ ‘ And this,’ I soliloquized, as I threw myself upon the soft couch in my comfortable room, —

“ ‘ This is only one little sketch of real life, representing the bigotry and absurdities of a few, who fain would have it understood to the world, that they lead off, in the great work of reform, in civilizing, moralizing, christianizing, and equalizing the whole human family; that through their great, laudable, and unmistakable efforts, the deserts shall blossom as the rose; the land, where broods the darkness of heathenism, shall beam with an effulgence brighter than the noonday sun.

“ ‘ And the doomed slave, when the power of their

influence reaches him, shall lay aside his chain and fetters, and sing and dance in the wild ecstasy of his new-born freedom.

“ ‘ Such reformers always remind me of some poor souls who never find time to set their houses in order, or to look after their own ignorant, ragged, starving urchins, because they are needed so much abroad.

“ ‘ One neighbor is going to have a quilting, and all the town will be there. And another will have an apple-paring; another a corn husking; another a sewing-bee, to prepare the fall and winter clothing for a whole family.

“ ‘ And then the prayer-meetings and religious festivals, surprise parties and a score of donation parties, and social gatherings, and other imperative duties and diversions abroad, leave them neither time nor inclination to repair the mischief in their own homes which their zeal for others has deprived them.

“ ‘ Thus it is with such reformers, and in fact with the whole world, continually overlooking the duties and obligations of home for something more remote.

“ ‘ Oh, the world is upside down entirely. It only wants Kate Stanton to set a peg or two loose to give the great wheel a jog the right way. And I’ll do it too, Rosa. I’ve been taking lessons all these years in that very important science.

“ ‘ I am going to give lectures on “ The world as it is,

and as it ought to be." And there is nobody can do that so well as Kate Stanton, the very identical Kate Stanton.

" ' I have got a patent right for them, just as much as Uncle Noah had for his old ark ; and they defy competition, just as much as did Solomon's Temple, or the great bell of Moscow. And when Kate Stanton does mount the stump, won't the world take a jog the right way ? And oh, won't there be a shaking amongst the dry stubble and underbrush, and upper-crust too ? I'll break through as easily as an elephant breaks through a frog-pond. So you may be sure of a sensation then, somewhat resembling that of an earthquake, or an eruption of fire and brimstone from some Magdaline mountain.'

" I had been sitting a long while in that comfortable easy-chair, revolving in my own mind the best subjects and methods of adoption, in order to be successful in my great world revolution, when my aunt broke in with, —

" ' Well, I declare ! dreaming again, and not a wink of sleep ; and here it is verging close upon midnight.

" ' You must certainly overcome this injurious habit, child, or the next thing I shall hear of you, after you leave Willow Dale, will be confinement in a lunatic asylum.

“ ‘Now you have only four hours for repose and breakfast, before the old stage-coach will come rattling over the hills, to bear you away, my mad-eap niece, to your distant home.

“ ‘It grieves me to part with you, child, but I know you will never forget your old aunt of Heatherton Hall amidst the gay and exciting scenes of your city home. And remember that your bridal tour must be toward the rising of the sun.’

“ ‘O yes, aunty, I shall remember all that, and more too. I shall never, never forget your kindness to Effie and little Charley; and I know that, while you live, they will never be without a home again.

“ ‘God bless you, aunty,’ I continued, kissing away the tears, as she turned to leave the room. ‘I shall never, never forget, what a good kind aunt I have got nestled away upon the rocky coast of the Pine-tree State.’

“ In a few hours I had bade old Heatherton and its inmates a kindly and reluctant adieu; and the old stage, in which I was ensconsed, was soon rattling over the hills and through the wild woods and clearings of Maine, in the direction of the old Bay State and the busy Spindle City.

“ You remember Helen Mordant and Lotty Elton, Rosa? ”

“I remember them as the boarders of Mother Gourdon; but knew nothing further of their history, than that they were very quiet, intelligent, ladylike, and factory girls, with the rest of us.

“I remember, too, that some of the girls called Helen ‘Miss Gentility,’ and Lotty, ‘Miss Delicate Touch-me-not.’ They were both very pretty and well-educated girls, and I think that some reversion of fortune was the cause of their becoming operatives in a cotton mill.”

“Such was the case, Rosa. I had a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with them than you had.

“You know I never made myself a stranger in any of the apartments in old No. 10. I always took a free pass everywhere, and never felt myself an intruder either.

“And wild as I am, Helen and Lotty often made me their confidant and adviser in many important matters connected with their history of real life. After awhile they both left No. 10 and the cotton mill for the hymenial noose.

“Helen removed to B——, a beautiful shore town in the vicinity of Portland, and Lotty became a resident of S——, in the old Granite State, bordering on the Massachusetts line.

“Well, their homes lay directly on my route to the Spindle City, and I gladly availed myself of that

opportunity to spend a day with each, and talk over the scenes of ‘Auld Lang Syne,’ and renew our pledges of ‘Friendship, Love, and Truth,’ for the future.

“To-morrow I will give you a sketch of each of them, as they were told to me, for I know that you will be interested, inasmuch as they were inmates of the same home and cotton mill with ourselves.”



CHAPTER XXXI.

KATE'S JOURNEY TO THE SPINDLE CITY.—SHE VISITS OLD ASSOCIATES.—HER RECEPTION AT COL. G——'S COUNTRY-SEAT.

“‘**T**O WHOM does that beautiful mansion belong, which seems to rise in grand superiority above the many handsome buildings around it?’ I inquired of the coachman, as we leisurely journeyed through the beautiful town of B——, bordering on the sea-coast.

“‘That,’ said the driver, ‘is the country-seat of Col. G——, the place where, by your direction, I am to leave you, and an elegant situation it is too. He is a gentleman of great wealth and respectability, and enjoys a goodly supply of happiness, as you may well suppose.

“By this time we had ridden along nearly opposite the splendid mansion, and there sat Helen, lovely as ever, and the very picture of happiness, beneath a piazza shaded by woodbines, caressing a beautiful infant, and by her side sat her companion, regarding them with a look of tenderness, while a smile of delight played over his manly brow.

“ ‘Here,’ thought I, ‘is a scene for a painter, rife with joy and beauty.’

“Helen met me with open arms, while a glad tear sparkled in the clear depths of her beautiful eyes; and then, oh how proudly she presented to me her noble husband and darling babe.

“ ‘So,’ I said, as we sat at eventide in her richly furnished parlor, ‘you are not ashamed to continue acquaintanceship with your old companions of the Spindle City.’

“ ‘Ashamed! Oh no, no, dear Kate. I thank God for the lessons I learned in a cotton mill. To me they have been like the refiner’s fire, separating the true gold from the worthless dross of vaunted friendship. Had I never been an inmate of a cotton mill, I should never have become the mistress of this elegant home, nor the happy wife and mother which you now find me.

“ ‘Did I ever tell you, Kate, how I became an operative?

“ ‘Well, then, from my childhood I had been a dependent upon the generosity of Dr. Loring, and at eighteen was the affianced bride of his eldest son.

“ ‘Alonzo being the eldest, had received a collegiate education, and gained a medical profession.

“ ‘He had loved me from childhood, and that love had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength.

“ ‘And when far from home, whether in the halls of literature, or bending over pages of classic lore, or consuming the midnight oil, he said that my spirit seemed ever present with him, pointing him onward to fame and honor.

“ ‘He had fled from the gay throng of beauty and fashion, and, like the magnet to the pole, his heart turned true to the light and joys of home and me.

“ ‘His parents saw, approved, and encouraged the attachment; while they strove to cultivate my mind for the station which they fondly anticipated I should fill.

“ ‘Alonzo was making preparations to fill a vacancy in the beautiful village of M——, and I was thinking of another enterprise.

“ ‘A few evenings before his departure, I was sitting in our favorite arbor, when he broke in upon my reveries, with, —

“ ‘Upon my word, Helen, I verily believed you had lost your senses, or that they had taken an aerial flight; for I have been standing at the entrance of the arbor a long time, and you appeared wholly unconscious of it. Tell me, my dear, for I believe that I should now almost claim a right to read your thoughts, where have they been straying, that the voice of your lover and betrothed could not recall them?’

“ ‘Oh,’ I answered, blushing, and raising my eyes timidly to his, ‘they were only taking a little excursion to the Spindle City.’

“ ‘To the Spindle City! You surprise me, Helen; what is there within those huge brick walls, and the buzz of spindles, and clattering of looms and machinery, to absorb the heart and soul of my lovely Helen? I was not aware that any friend of yours was confined within the precincts of a factory yard.’

“ ‘Nor is there,’ I answered; ‘but you know, Alonzo, that for many years I have been a dependent upon your father’s generosity; and to you I am betrothed, and in one year we are to be united.

“ ‘I cannot, after receiving so many favors from your parents, throw myself, a penniless dependent and almost beggar, upon their son, who has nothing but his profession to commence with.

“ ‘I am, therefore, resolved to quit, for the present, these rural haunts, these hills and glens, and deep, shadowy, wild-woods, and, more than all, this happy home, and the society of those, dear as my life, for the dull monotony and clamor of a factory yard.’

“ ‘Oh, Helen!’ he said, ‘is it possible that you have come to such a determination? You, the graceful, lovely, and accomplished Helen Mordant! Is this the use you would make of those rare accomplishments, by mingling with the low and vulgar factory operatives, and burying your superior talents in the earth?’

“ ‘You mistake, Alonzo,’ I said. ‘It is an honorable, or at least an honest, vocation; besides, I shall find

many worthy and accomplished young ladies there, who prefer a factory life to the galling chains of poverty or dependence; and many, very many, go there from choice, who have wealthy parents. So, you see, that I shall not be at a loss for associates.

“ ‘And as for my accomplishments, if a few months in a factory should tarnish them or diminish their brilliancy, they surely cannot be founded upon the sure standard of virtue and piety.

“ ‘I know, my dear Alonzo, that you will not love me the less for being separated from you, although my occupation may not be quite so congenial to your feelings.

“ ‘Some, perhaps, may sneer, and slander may throw her poisonous darts at me, but I know that you have a mind far above those who look upon honest labor with contempt. It is with the greatest confidence that I shall leave you, Alonzo, well knowing that yours is a heart too noble to be changed by the pernicious breath of slander.’ ”

CHAPTER XXXII.

A FACTORY GIRL'S HOME.

“ ‘**Y**OU ARE a noble girl,’ Alonzo said, after sitting some moments in a thoughtful mood, ‘and if you go, never for once suffer yourself to think that I shall be untrue. No; but I love you the better for the sacrifice.

“ ‘You will have my consent to go, not for the gains of a few months of toil, but to give you an opportunity of raising yourself from that dependence which, to a mind like yours, I know is intolerable.

“ ‘It is not for my happiness that I thus consent to part with you; but yours, solely yours; and, with the blessing of Heaven, I leave you to your most excellent judgment, which I know will never misguide you.

“ ‘May you ever be as happy as you are good. Believe me, Helen, when I tell you, that I shall not long deprive myself of that happiness and society which has, for years, been a day-star to all the hopes, exertions, and privations of the past, and will be as a secret spring to every enterprise of the future. Take this,’ he con-

tinued, placing a ring upon my finger, ‘take this, as a pledge of our mutual love and my truth; and, as I have told you, never doubt my faithfulness to you. Give yourself no uneasiness, if sometimes you should be disappointed in the reception of a letter; for, soon after your departure, I intend to take up my residence in the little village which you have so often admired for its picturesque and romantic scenery; and the responsibility, care, and many perplexities attending a young, inexperienced physician, I fear, will sometimes deprive me of the pleasure of communing with one I would ever love and cherish.

“ ‘Let us leave the arbor, and return home by the winding path, shaded by the drooping branches of the trees we pruned and cultured when our young spirits were light and buoyant as air, and we sported fearless and free as the passing zephyr.

“ ‘See! the sun has long since sunk behind the range of mountains far to the west, and the moon is already dipping her smiling face in the placid waters of our beautiful lake, and throwing her silvery light on the hills and home of our childhood.’

“ ‘Perhaps,’ I replied, ‘when we again shall visit this spot, endeared to us by so many pleasing recollections, a change may have passed over our youthful anticipations, and like yonder beautiful flower, bent to the earth by the weight of the night-dews, our spirits may be bowed

down and broken by disappointment, treachery, or misfortune.

“ ‘But we will leave the future with Him who orders all things for the best; and while we trust in Him, we shall never fail to be happy.’

“ ‘When a few weeks more had passed away, I was an operative in a cotton mill, and Alonzo had removed to his station in the beautiful village of M——.

“ ‘It was at the close of a warm, sultry day in August, some few months after our separation, a day which had been one of great exertion and care to Alonzo, that he had seated himself by a window in his office to enjoy a little relaxation from his arduous task, and regale himself with the cool breezes which swept over a beautiful valley and river which emerged from a deep forest, and then suddenly hiding itself behind a rocky and beautifully shaded highland.

“ ‘His window looked out upon a scenery not surpassed in New England for its beauty and sublimity.

“ ‘He was lost in a deep and pleasant reverie, when the post-boy hastily entered, and carelessly tossing a letter upon the table, withdrew.

“ ‘He took it, and hastily recognized the handwriting of his own and distant Helen.

“ ‘He read it over and over again, while each thought and sentiment of his heart beat in unison with those traced in the little sheet he held before him; and he was happy.

“ ‘ Thus he sat, fondly dreaming of a more propitious future, when a strain of music, soft and plaintive as the æolian harp, arrested his attention.

“ ‘ He readily perceived from whence it proceeded ; for in an opposite building, by an open casement, sat a being of surpassing beauty.

“ ‘ Her long dark tresses, which were slightly agitated by the passing zephyrs, fell in luxuriance over a neck and shoulders of perfect mould.

“ ‘ Her eyes, dark as the gazelle’s, seemed intently fixed upon the piece of music she was performing, while her small white hands swept lightly over her harp, accompanied by a voice bewitchingly sweet and soft as a syren’s.

“ ‘ He seemed spell-bound to the spot, entranced by the magical sweetness of her voice and harp, till he saw her sylphlike form glide gracefully from the apartment.

“ ‘ With sensations, which a short time before were most foreign to his mind, he retired to his lodgings, while her beautiful figure danced before his imagination with all the lightness and elasticity of youth, and her clear, mellow voice and song completely intoxicated his senses, so that for once his Helen and her recent letter were entirely forgotten.

“ ‘ Thus, night after night passed away ; she artfully laying her plans to entrap him, while he was uncon-

sciously yielding to her insinuations and captivating smiles. Angelia Ingalls was a heartless coquette, the only daughter of a very wealthy merchant, and the sole heir of his large estate, and also possessing a face and form surpassingly beautiful.

“ ‘But it was only a casket that contained no jewel; for through those dark eyes a noble intellect and lofty soul never emitted its brilliant rays, nor melted with the deep sympathetic emotions of a generous heart.

“ ‘She could smile upon the gay butterflies of fashion, the dupes of her artifices that swarmed around her, and frown upon those too honest to flatter. In short, she was a proud, self-conceited, vain beauty.

“ ‘Such was Angelia when Alonzo Loring became a resident of the beautiful village of M——.

“ ‘She saw him daily as he entered his office, and was struck with his fine figure and noble deportment, and was at once determined to have his name enrolled upon the list of her many admirers.

“ ‘I shall succeed,’ she said, after spending an hour at her toilet, on the evening we introduce her. ‘I shall succeed if my mirror informs me right, and I know it is correct. Yes, I shall succeed,’ she continued, as she tastefully arranged her dark, glossy ringlets over her alabaster brow and neck of snowy whiteness.

“ ‘Then, with an air and expression which was sure of a conquest, she seated herself by the open casement, opposite the young physician’s office.’

“ ‘And did she succeed?’ I inquired, rather anxious to know the result of her artful schemings.

“ ‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘the noble and talented Alonzo Loring suffered his heart to be led captive by a silly woman, and, within a few short months, she became his bride.

“ ‘I had been a resident of Lowell nearly a year, and was making preparations to return home, with the expectation of becoming Alonzo’s wife, when one evening as I returned to my boarding-house, old No. 10, rather more dispirited than usual, for, notwithstanding my confidence in Alonzo, I had a presentiment that all was not right; his long silence I could not attribute to urgent business.

“ ‘But on entering my room, I found two letters to my address.

“ ‘A ray of hope lighted up my heart, and for a moment dispelled my sad forebodings; but it was only for a moment. For, on opening Alonzo’s letter, I read with dismay that he was the husband of another.

“ ‘Forgive me Helen,’ the letter said, ‘I have injured you; but I am not worthy to possess one so pure and heaven-like. You will be happy, for you will have no broken vow rankling in your bosom, and no dark deeds of treachery or inconstancy to throw their blighting mildew over your youthful pathway.’

“ ‘When I had finished this letter, I arose from my

seat, and, meekly bowing, committed my case to Him who gives grace sufficient in every time of need, and strength equal to our day.

“ ‘It was a deep, deep struggle, but my mind arose superior, and I tore him from the shrine of my heart.

“ ‘I opened the seal of the other letter. This informed me that my only sister was rapidly declining with consumption, and a request that I would hasten to see her.

“ ‘This announcement aroused all my energies to action, and the next day found me on my way to my sister’s home in a distant town.

“ ‘I will not attempt to describe the emotions of my heart, as I anxiously watched over my dying sister; but when I felt that death had severed the only tie which bound me to earth, the world seemed to lose its charms, and for once I wished myself lying by her side, for I was alone.

“ ‘Time passed on, and I had regained much of my former cheerfulness; the rose again bloomed upon my cheek, and smiles chased the shadows from my lip and brow, when Col. G——, a distant relative of my sister’s husband, came to spend a few months of summer with him, for the benefit of the pure country air.

“ ‘He was a gentleman of great wealth and respectability, and when he became acquainted with me — strange as it may seem to you — he made ardent professions of love, and won me for his bride.

“‘And here we live, enjoying a goodly share of happiness, as you may well suppose.’”

“And what,” said I, “has become of Alonzo?”

“‘Oh,’ Helen replied, ‘when at college he took a glass now and then with his jovial, wine-drinking companions, and so after his marriage he became intemperate.’”

“‘His friends who had patronized him left, one after another, until he was obliged, by his embarrassed circumstances, to leave his beautiful village, and emigrate to the West, where he still lives, not the happiest of men, cherishing within his breast the charm of a broken vow.’”

“‘And I have never regretted the year that I spent in a cotton mill, nor the discipline which awarded the true gold for the dross.’”

“Just then ‘the true gold,’ in the shape of her devoted Col. G—— entered, with his little crowing baby, who, with outstretched arms and coaxing ‘goo-goo,’ nestled its little dimpled face joyfully within its mother’s bosom.”

“A right happy day was that which I spent with Helen, in her luxurious home, and not, until I had promised to repeat my visit the ensuing summer, and stay a whole month with them at their country-seat, was I allowed to take my departure.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

KATE VISITS LOTTY ELTON IN THE OLD GRANITE STATE. — HER STORY. — MIRA GRANBY GOING TO AUNT BOSTON'S.

“ I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled,
Above the green elms, that a cottage was near;
And I said if there's peace to be found in the world,
A heart that is humble might hope for it here.”

“ I T W A S at the close of my day's journey, after leaving Helen and her luxurious home, that the old stage-coach gained the summit of a hill from which I had a view of the romantic residence of my old friend of the Spindle City, Lotty Elton.

“ It was a white cottage, almost concealed by the clustering vine and tall, sweeping elms which surrounded and overshadowed it. At a little distance in the background, a broad stream meandered along its rocky bank, and further in was the broad, deep, shadowy forest, tinged with all the variegated beauty of early autumn.

“ The keen bracing air which swept over the towering heights of the old Granite State, imparted to the weary travellers a buoyancy of spirit and a deeper glow to the

healthful cheek, which made the appearance of a cheerful fire and comfortably-furnished parlor a desirable treat.

“ ‘And surely,’ I thought, ‘a heart not quite so humble might hope for happiness here; and, I doubt not, that the inmates of that romantic cottage enjoy it to perfection.’

“ Well, while the jaded horses are ambling wearily along over the rocky road which lay between us and that vine-embowered cottage, I will just give you a little sketch of its mistress, Lotty Elton.

“ Lotty Elton’s father was a merchant of some considerable note and respectability, although he had ever resided in the old ancestral home, which had submitted to many improvements and enlargements since the days of his grandfather.

“ Yet the ‘moss-covered bucket’ still remained suspended in the well as in days of yore, and the tall, gigantic elm, which had stood nearly a century, still shaded the front door with its thick and verdant foliage; and far away—in front of the house—lay a beautiful lawn, around which a sunny rivulet meandered, shaded by trees of various size and form.

“ While along the western horizon the White Mountains of New Hampshire arose with grand and imposing majesty.

“ And even the dense and shadowy forest, gently

bowing to the summer's breeze, was not the least to give interest and beauty to a place so enchantingly lovely and romantic as that which surrounded the home of the Eltons.

“It was here that Lotty first breathed the pure air of heaven, and felt its balmy breath fanning her innocent and childish brow.

“It was here she first sported with the opening buds of spring, and culled, with her tiny fingers, the gaudy flowers of summer.

“It was here she learned the purity and worth of parental affection, the fond and sacred ties of ‘Home, sweet home.’

“It was here that sixteen summers of her sunny life had been spent, without even one cloud of sorrow to obscure its brilliancy; and the future seemed to arise before her as bright and flowery as the past had been.

“Lotty was beautiful, very beautiful, with a lithe and graceful figure, a proud and beaming eye of the deepest blue, and an air of dignity and refinement, scarcely, if ever, excelled by those of maturer years.

“Her hair was of that bright, golden hue, which poets have celebrated in song, shading a neck and brow of transparent whiteness.

“But these were not the richest and loveliest of Heaven's gifts to Lotty; for she possessed a confiding, sensitive, and affectionate heart, a sweetness and amia-

bility of disposition which plainly bespoke the innocence and purity of her young and tender mind.

“At sixteen she was sent to a neighboring town to finish the education upon which as yet no pains or expense had been withheld, in order to make her an accomplished lady, and fit her for usefulness in the world.

“But ere one term of those happy school-days had passed away, she was hurriedly summoned to attend the last hours of a dying mother.

“Death is everywhere an unbidden and unwelcome guest. He enters alike, uncalled for, the hermit’s hut and the princely palace. Emperors and nobles, with the obscure cottagers, bow before the desolating and powerful influence. Cities and towns, from the cold, frozen mountains of Greenland, to the soft, balmy, and fertile plains of India, are laid waste by his destroying arm, and submit to his relentless mandate; and who dare bid defiance to his grim, unearthly visage?

“One year made direful changes within the walls of that old mansion, for death had been busy there, and all that Lotty had clung to in life had been made its victims.

“And the world to her, full of life and activity as it was, appeared a worthless blank; its bright and glowing charms faded before her; and even hope, with her flattering smile and delusive whisperings, could not find

a resting-place within her desolate and sorrow-stricken bosom.

“After Mr. Elton’s death, it appeared that his estate was in a very embarrassed situation, and his partners in business skilfully managed to secure the little that remained after the demands of the creditors had been supplied.

“Lotty had been delicately and affectionately nurtured in the lap of indulgence, and care and toil had never imposed themselves upon her youthful pathway.

“Now she was penniless. Young and inexperienced as she was, she must be cast upon the mercies of a cold-hearted and relentless world. Her heart died within her, as a sense of her present lonely and defenceless situation came up before her.

“She looked back upon the past, but tears and despondency were all that remained as a tribute to its receding joys.

“‘And what can I do?’ she asked herself, while the storm of conflicting emotions raged wildly within her gentle bosom.

“‘La! why don’t you go to the factory, Lotty?’ said Mira Grandby, the former associate and almost constant companion of Lotty Elton in her happier and more prosperous days. ‘Go to the factory, Lotty, that is just the place for such girls as you; and there’s lots of them there, I can tell you.’

“ ‘I thought of going there myself, if my father is Esquire Grandby, just to get me some fine clothes, and such like, for my bridal gear ; but I’ve given it up now. Aunt Boston has sent for me, and says she wants to bring me out, because I’m handsome and attractive, and all that. And so I’ve given up Frank Deyton too, because my aunt says, that she is going to get me a husband that don’t make his *debut* into the world and society in general every day.

“ ‘Aunt Boston is one of the aristocrats, and she knows a thing or two. And I’m going just as soon as I can get ready, and Frank Deyton may go to grass, unless — you — well there,’ she said, laughing outright, I never thought of it before ; but, Lotty, he would be a capital match for you, and I will tell him so.

“ ‘If you should go to the factory, you might go when I do ; for Aunt Boston doesn’t live thirty miles from the Spindle City. But then I should have to cut you there, for it would never do to let aunt know that I was acquainted with a factory girl.

“ ‘But I will write to you once, only I shan’t let aunt know it, just to let you know how aristocracy and I get along at Aunt Boston’s.

“ ‘My aunt’s proposals are very flattering, don’t you think so, Lotty ? Pshaw, I shall give up Frank and every thing else connected with my rustic home, without much regret.’ ”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MIRA GRANDBY'S VISIT AT AUNT BOSTON'S, AND WHAT CAME
OF IT.

“‘THIS IS a little paradise, Lotty, and you are a little witching waif, flitting here and there and everywhere, like a dancing sunbeam; and I every moment expecting that you will disappear altogether, and leave me in the shadow of doubt and perplexity respecting Mira Grandby's visit to her Aunt Boston, and what came of it.’

“‘No, no, dear Kate; wait just one moment longer, till I get little Frank and Willie nicely adjusted in their little trundle-bed, and the baby tucked up warm and comfortable in his soft, cosy crib, and give Jane the necessary instructions, in preparing a nice warm supper for dear Frank when he returns from his long ride up the river, and one or two more tit-bits of housewifery, and then, Kate——’

“In a few moments she bounded girlishly into the room, and taking a seat upon the sofa by my side, commenced :

“ ‘Frank had loved Mira Grandby devotedly and truly, and when the truth of her heartless coquetry flashed upon his mind, with unmistakable force, it wellnigh seemed to unman him.’

“ ‘But without a word of remonstrance he left her, and followed a little footpath along the river’s bank, in the direction of his cottage home. He gained a favorite moss-covered seat, constructed by the rude hand of nature, and, burying his face in his labor-soiled palm, he wept. Yes, the strong man wept.

“ ‘In a moment, as if by some sudden impulse, he started up; his cheek was flushed, the full veins were almost bursting through the throbbing temples, and the swollen eyes were wet with bitter tears.’

“ ‘I see how it is,’ he exclaimed. ‘I am poor, and she a votary of fashion and wealth; but she shall repent it.’

“ ‘And there, beneath the broad and high-arched canopy of heaven, with the bright flowing river at his feet, and around him the soft, ravishing smiles of the silvery moonbeams, he formed a high and holy resolve.

“ ‘Begone every remembrance of the past,’ he said, with an energy that only those of a great soul can command, as he brushed from his cheek and brow every trace of bitterness and tears.

“ ‘These tears,’ he said to himself, ‘are the offspring of weakness, and ill become a man of high resolves.

She is not worthy of them ; no, the woman who will sacrifice her own and others' happiness for wealth, is not worthy a tear of regret.

“ ‘ I will forget her, at least so far as never again to bestow upon her the purest offerings of my youthful love.’ ”

“ ‘ From that hour Frank Deyton was another man. Decision was stamped upon every feature, and “ advancement and perseverance ” was his motto, while fame seemed already reaching forth to raise him to her high and honored pinnacle.

“ ‘ I went to Lowell, and with a thankful heart commenced the honest and pleasant labors of an operative in a cotton mill ; but before one year had passed away, in that pleasant occupation, I had pledged my heart and hand to the discarded of Mira Grandby.

“ ‘ But here is her letter ; you know that she promised to write me once, and here it is. It is so characteristic of its inventor, that I have carefully preserved it.’ ”

“ DEAR LOTTY, — You, surrounded by a city of spindles and cotton bags, can scarcely imagine the pleasures and gayeties of genteel city life. Sailing, riding, promenading, parties, balls, and operas, crowding upon each other in rapid succession.

It is a continual routine of gayety ; even my aunt of forty receives the admiration of the gay world as much

as the maid of eighteen. I am ever by her side, and you must suppose that my vanity is sometimes very much flattered, on entering a crowded hall, to hear my name pronounced with emphasis by some smart, dashing gallant, or distinguished gentleman.

I often fancy that I see envy-lurking beneath many a long silken lash of the beautiful elite on my approach; for they call me beautiful, notwithstanding my aunt greatly annoys me, by sometimes introducing me as her husband's niece from the country.

Oh! the dull, uncouth, country life! I am almost ashamed of its being the place of my birth and childhood; although, in cooler moments, I do look back upon the innocent sports and pleasures with something like regret, that I was ever induced to leave them by a selfish and calculating aunt.

I do believe, Lotty, that she was selfish in taking me into her family; for I have learned, by accident, that they are in straitened circumstances, and with my assistance they are enabled to dispense with one servant, and thereby the more securely keep up appearances. My aunt often keeps me whole mornings engaged in the cook-room, under the false pretence that it is what every young lady should be thoroughly acquainted with.

But I learned that accomplishment, long ago, in my own mother's kitchen, and it is because I have learned it so well, that I must be kept in servitude during long

mornings, when I would rather be promenading the principal streets, or making pleasant calls upon some of the accomplished ladies of my acquaintance.

If my aunt discovers any thing like discontent upon my brow, she is always near to praise me for my superior beauty and improved appearance ; and her great tact at playing the agreeable soon drives every unhappy sensation from my breast.

She well repays the privations of the morning, by taking me to some scene of gayety and amusement in the evening.

Proposals for my hand as yet have been rather limited, although I have many admirers. Only one has proposed for my hand, and he is a wealthy foreigner of noble descent. You would think he was a millionaire, from the splendid appearance he makes in the world of fashion.

I have not made up my mind to accept him, for I must confess that he is ugly looking, although his great wealth is a very prominent feature of beauty to be sure. It is whispered that he is dissipated, but that I think is not true, further than is every young man of fashion. He seems quite a ladies' man, and well designed to please. My aunt is rather inclined to think I had better accept his proposals, from selfishness I dare say, but I care not what her motives may be ; if she will only secure to me a splendid alliance, I will take care of the result.

By the way, I will just inquire after my old gallant, Frank Deyton; I almost blush when I compare him with the accomplished and pleasing admirers who throng around me. I have not heard a word from him since I left my country home; poor fellow, I suppose he is quite inconsolable, for I think that he did love me truly and ardently.

Do offer him a little of your sweet condolence, Lotty. I did not make him an offer of your hand, as I intended, from the fact that I never got a sight at him, after I gave him the mitten. But here comes my beau elect, in his dashing carriage; so, after having nearly filled my sheet, without saying half that I wish to, I must close abruptly, wishing you a happy union with some one of the honest backwoodsmen.

MIRA GRANDBY."



CHAPTER XXXV.

LOTTY'S LETTER TO MIRA GRANDBY. — HER VINDICATION OF
FACTORY GIRLS.

“ ‘IT IS enough,’ I said, as I hastily refolded the cold and heartless letter from one who, from childhood, had been my friend and confidant. Enough to show me the contaminating influence of a life of gayety and vain amusements, where the soul is void of lofty principle, and the heart of holy emotions. Enough to show me a mind incapable of appreciating the warm, pure, and generous affections of an honest and noble heart.

“ ‘How art thou fallen, Mira, friend of other days, from the high standard upon which my affections had placed thee!

“ ‘I will yet make one effort to recall thee, I said, and heaven grant that it may prove effectual. And, taking a pen, I hastily wrote a few lines; but you will excuse me, Katy dear, if I don’t expose it to your criticism, she said, as she made a sly movement to conceal a mysterious looking package under her apron.

“ ‘ Not a bit of it Lotty ; I never excuse any thing but the toothache and the doctor’s bill ; so, like a wise judge as I am, I must hear both sides of the matter to understand the case perfectly ; so let that little mysterious package display itself to the public once in a lifetime.’ ”

“ ‘ Well, Katy, here it is, for better or for worse,’ she said, as she reluctantly commenced.”

“ FRIEND MIRA, — For such I would still deem thee, although by your recent letter, I perceive that a change has come over the friend of my early youth.

If the pleasures and gayeties of a city life, which you say I can scarcely imagine, ensconced away in this City of Spindles and cotton bags, have wrought this direful change in you, I must say that they are contaminating indeed. Contrast for a moment the pure, innocent, elevated joys of an unaspiring, unassuming factory girl, who rises in the early morn, tuning her cheerful lays with the earliest matins of the lark, as she trips lightly to her task, called by the merry chiming of the factory bells, inhaling the first fragrant breath of dewy morn from shrub and flower, with the flush of health on her cheek, and the light of vigor and buoyancy of spirit in the eye, contentment and tranquillity in the heart.

Contrast her for a moment with the reigning city belle, who spends her nights in a round of gayety and

amusements, seeking for admiration, aspiring after the wealth and applause of the world, sleeping away a glorious summer morn, until the downy pillow has become a weariness, and then, pale and languid, arises only to prepare for another scene of amusement and dissipation.

Think you not, Mira, that the pleasures of the factory girl, or the retired country girl, are by far more elevated and pure than those which pervade the breast of the vain votary of fashion and admiration? From your own experience of country life, you can answer.

Reflect soberly and candidly. Leave a vain, conceited, artful, and selfish aunt, and return once more to the home of your childhood, to the scenes of earlier days.

Seek a father's protecting mansion, a mother's kind guidance; for no selfish, designing plots, find a resting-place in a mother's heart, but love, pure and holy, such as fills the breasts of angels.

There, around your own native home, all nature is spread out to please the eye of man, and satisfy in some degree his noble aspirations.

There the broad fields are waving with the rich, golden harvest, and the deep, shadowy woodlands are just beginning to put on their robes of variegated beauty; and their summer songsters are chanting their farewell lays, ere they take their departure for the fragrant bowers and balmy air of a southern shore.

Then, like those wandering songsters, Mira, return to thy more congenial home, a home which will protect thee from the cold, withering blight of an artful and designing world. A home which will shield thee from the vile slanderer's poisonous tongue, which has blotted out the fair fame of many as innocent, virtuous, and lovely as thyself; a home which shall be as a strong battlement from the tempter's wiles and the flatterer's bland and deceitful smiles.

Return again to thy home, and when one, all worthy of thy heart and hand, shall lay before thee the richest, purest offerings of a disinterested love, turn not away with contemptuous scorn; for remember, it must be the purest and most devoted love which can make thy husband a blessing, and thy fireside the seat of happiness and contentment.

But all the wealth of the Indies, combined with the honors and applause of the world, can never secure to thee a life of tranquillity and happiness; if he, whom thou shouldst vow to love and obey, should prove the reverse of tenderness and affection.

Then seek in a companion for life a man of worth; not the worth of dollars and cents and broad domains, but the worth of the mind and soul; a man of ennobling virtues, from whose heart flow undisguised the purest emotions of a disinterested love. One who will respect

thy purity, who will appreciate thy virtues, thy society, thy love, for thyself alone.

Then give to such an one, Mira, your hand, your heart, your confidence, your all; for there you may be assured that your peace, your happiness, your respectability are safe.

Seek not thus earnestly the vain, unmeaning admiration of the world, for it vanishes like the vapory cloud before the scorching rays of a noonday sun.

Desire not the shining wealth of earth, for it flies away like the mountain mist before a sunny morn.

Then seek those more endurable riches, an inheritance in the skies, a crown of glory. Seek earnestly, unceasingly, that better part which shall never be taken away from you, and that friend who never, no, never forsakes; and great will be your happiness on earth, and greater your reward in heaven.

You requested me to write you something concerning Frank Deyton. You well know that he had acquired a superior business education, and, since you left home, he has spent one term at our well-disciplined seminary, and now is a student at the Theological Institution in A——, a few miles distant from this City of Spindles and cotton bags. And so far is he from being inconsolable, that he is pursuing his studies with great spirit and perseverance, and I presume that at some future day you will hear from him again; for, as I have previously

told you, he bids fair to become a great and distinguished man.

So far as it regards myself, I will say that I have not formed an alliance with any one as yet; for I think it a subject which requires great deliberation.

It is a vow which seals to every one a life of misery or happiness; although I should think it an honor to bestow my hand and heart upon an honest backwoodsman, who has been free from the temptations and vices which so often cross the path of a youth of wealth and fashion in a gay city.

You may think that I have been rather explicit, but I dared not be otherwise, when I consider the happiness, the reputation, the all, was at stake of her whom I have ever considered a friend and confidant.

LOTTY.

M—— CORPORATION, No. 10.”



CHAPTER XXXVI.

MIRA GRANDBY WEDS AN ARISTOCRAT.—HE PROVES A GAMBLER
AND SPENDTHRIFT.—AT LAST DESERTS HER.

“‘**T**HAT IS just like Lotty Elton,’ said Mira, as she carelessly threw aside the letter, and resumed her languid, reclining position upon the sofa.

“‘I might have expected the same from her. She is always preaching up purity, morality, and love in a cottage, and I half suspect that she is envious of the good fortune my beauty and accomplishments are likely to win.

“‘But I will not be duped by her; I’m for a life of happiness in a splendid alliance. What is all her love worth, her tenderness and affection in retired poverty, compared with the gayeties and amusements of a fashionable world.

“‘Just as if Mira Grandby would return again to the dull monotony of a country life, and be happy with some promising sprout of the bush. A fig for your preaching, Lotty, I go for admiration and wealth.’

“And away she flew with a heart intoxicated with

the bright anticipations of the future. It was a glorious evening, exquisite and lovely, although not half its beauties could be seen or felt or appreciated by the inhabitants of a crowded city.

“Neither could the bright glances of the silvery moonbeams throw their light and charms over the broad paved streets, unless riding high in the zenith ; and even then had those mild rays found admittance into one of the fashionable streets where ‘Aunt Boston’ resided, they would have been dimmed by the bright flood of light which streamed far and wide through the richly stained glass of her imposing mansion.

“Visitors, such as compose the elite of the city, were thronging around its massive portals, and admitted in princely style into the spacious halls and drawing-rooms so gorgeously illuminated.

“Mira was there, the gayest of the gay ; and her cup of bliss seemed wellnigh filled to overflowing. For on this eve she was to become the bride of the distinguished foreigner.

“Many were the congratulations bestowed upon the fair and happy bride ; and she was indeed beautiful, as she stood with a form erect, and of the most perfect symmetry, before the hymenial altar, enveloped in the rich folds of white satin, her clear white brow placid as a summer’s sky, and her full dark eye danced with witching and wild delight.

“ Week after week passed away, and still the door of the princely mansion, over which Mira presided, was thrown open to admit the gay and fashionable votaries of pleasure. Mira was happy, for her full heart drank in all that it had fondly anticipated.

“ She had never stopped to study the character, the principles, or the demeanor of her companion ; for these were out of the question, so long as flatterers and admirers gathered around her, and wealth strewed her pathway with happiness almost unrivalled.

“ But the honey-moon soon gained its zenith, and then came the cold, cold waning ; for her health would not admit of a continuance in the gayeties and amusements which she had so eagerly sought, although her husband continued them with all the ardor and fondness of other days.

“ His wife was not by his side, but what mattered that ? there were others, as beautiful and gay as herself, to be his companion in the waltz and in many other amusements of whole evenings, sometimes almost forgetful of the wife at home.

“ Frequently had he spent whole nights abroad, until the morning’s dawn ; and then, with flushed cheek and unsteady step, would he return to the home of splendor, where discontent and uncertainty sat brooding over the enfeebled mind of his still beautiful wife.

“ She was formed for admiration, and this cold neglect

from one who should have been most assiduous in his attentions, was aggravating, in the extreme, to one whose sole happiness consisted in the amusements and gayeties of life, and the admiration and applause of men.

“ Oft when alone, and that was not seldom, did Mira wander through the spacious rooms of her splendid mansion, where art and genius of ancient and modern designs had placed their choicest signets ; where wealth and splendor seemed lavishly to unfold their treasures.

“ Her eyes would wander from one costly article of furniture to another, or rest upon some rare, magnificent decoration, and her heart would whisper, ‘ they are mine,’ but their beauty, their splendor and magnificence, filled not the void within, but rather seemed to mock the anguish of her lonely feelings.

“ And then she would weep, even in the midst of wealth and magnificence, where she supposed that tears and loneliness could never find an entrance.

“ Sometimes she would look back upon the days of her childhood, so peacefully and tranquilly spent in the retirement of the country ; and then she would recall to mind the worthy youth she had slighted and scorned, and her own just and merited retribution.

“ Sometimes my friendly advice would flit across her memory, but it only added sorrow to anguish, for she had learned, by painful and bitter experience, that wealth

is only a phantom when compared with the pure and devoted love of a husband.

“ Without it, although she was surrounded by everything to please the eye and satisfy her vain aspirations, she was miserable, unhappy, and unblest. Then came her hours of repentance, and a desire to live over again the happiness of the past.

“ Mira never again mingled with her former vanity and fondness in the gay world, since she beheld her husband in his true light; for, to her eye and to the world, the true characteristics of his nature seemed fully and fearfully developed.

“ He was a spendthrift and gambler of the deepest dye, accompanied by dissipated and dissolute habits, which rendered it necessary to give up the splendid establishment which he had obtained by fraud, rich and costly furniture, magnificent carriages, all, all must go, to screen him from justice. .

“ Then the guilty man left the wife of his bosom, the son which should have been a father's pride and glory, and sought on a foreign shore the home of his nativity, which he had disgraced and deserted in former years.

“ Mira, with a broken heart and blighted anticipations, sought, in the retired cottage of Esquire Grandby, an asylum from the keen blasts of an unpitying, unfriendly world, and a retreat from the cold, withering gaze of those who had falsely styled themselves friends in the days of her happiness and prosperity.

“But her pride, her ambition, her vanity was subdued to the very dust, and she returned a repentant, though erring child to the home of her childhood.

“‘And this is Frank Deyton’s cottage,’ continued Lotty, raising her beaming eyes with a proud expression to mine, ‘the boy of high resolves and the man of great achievements.

“‘He left college with high honors, and his brow was already wreathed with the laurels of fame. He had planted his standard on high ground, and it has never been shaken nor deserted.

“‘He went forth into the broad vineyard of his master with a firm, undaunted heart and willing hand, and became a successful and faithful preacher of the gospel. And I am his happy and honored wife,’ she said, as her eyes filled with the soft glittering dew-drops of happiness which welled up from the sunny fountains of her love-lighted heart.

“‘We often visit our native village,’ she continued, ‘and Mira Grandby too, but no word of condolence or encouragement can ever call her back to life and hope ; for her once buoyant heart is seared and broken, and the soul, almost in the spring-tide of life and youth, is subdued by affliction.

“‘She no longer seeks, with unguarded passion, the wealth and honors of the world, nor the applause and admiration of the gay and fashionable. And often, when

she listens to the touching and deep-toned eloquence of the handsome and dignified Frank Dayton, her heart reproaches her for ever becoming a vain and heartless votary of fashion.' ”

“ ‘ Served her right, Lotty,’ I said, ‘ for despising a true heart, a factory girl, a cotton mill, and country home ; because, forsooth, they did not have on a gilded mask of buffoonery and hypocrisy and all that sort of foolery.

“ ‘ I tell you what, Lotty, if the wife-hunters only knew which side their bread had the butter on, they would take an honest-hearted factory-girl to rule over their little republic, instead of the fashionable apes, and popinjays, and would-be butterflies who flit here and there and everywhere, for adulation and ease.

“ ‘ The great wheel of a cotton mill turns out some rare specimens of perfection in that line ; and, if I was a man in search of a wife, I would travel further than Jacob did for Rachel, and work harder too, to buy her ; and then I should think I had got the best end of the bargain. And I know that Frank Dayton will set his seal to this truthful assertion.’ ”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

KATE ON AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION. — SHE MAKES A DISCOVERY. — HER SIGNS OF A GOOD HUSBAND.

“THERE,” said Kate, yawningly, “I have got through with my stories at last, sentimentalism and all. I like Lotty and Helen, but the sentimental and I are at sword’s point.

“Why, I would no more marry a man that I thought was spiced up with that sort of stuff, than I would marry a Shampeaceso cannibal. I like good, substantial common sense, whether in man or beast; but the sentimental, oh, I never could tune my harp of a thousand strings to the vibration of those crotchets and quavers and solos, and all that. Kate Stanton will never make her debut into the ‘world as it is,’ to the time of any of that sort of music; but—what is this, Rosa?” she asked, drawing rather ungraciously toward her a huge basket filled with heavy brogans, upon which I had been employed through her interesting recital.

“Is this the way you use those little delicate fingers of yours’ Rosa? Why, I never thought they were fit for

any thing but to write poetry, paint on velvet, thread a shuttle, and tie a weaver's knot in that threefold cord which is not easily broken.

“And I did not suppose that you was so much of an abolitionist either, as to devote so much of your precious time for the benefit of the understanding and soles of those unfortunates who are held in durance vile, waiting for the bow of promise to span their dark horizon.”

“Don't, Kate, joke upon such serious subjects.”
“Joke? No, no Rosa; when I get my ‘World’ started, I mean to snap some of their manacles, or man-knuckles, and I shan't use a lather-brush, nor soft soap about it, either.

“I intend to be Kate Stanton, out-and-out, in that little globe of my own creating, to do and say just what I please, or rather just what I think is right, and for the best good of all concerned.

“I shan't sneak round any high places, nor low places, nor dark places, nor ogre's dens, nor any other dens; but, like a streak of lightning, I shall go right through the whole mass of hypocrisy, wrenching away the cowls, and masks, and sheep-skins, and golden drapery from every blackheart, and blackleg, and long-eared Neptunes, just as easily as the lightning strips the trembling foliage from a swaying sapling.

“I told you long ago that I was getting my lessons for an up-start, and that I should take the whole ‘World’

for a circuit too. I have got all through 'Lucy Stone,' and am taking a degree a notch higher.

"But what's this?" she said, continuing her exploring expedition to the bottom of my huge work-basket.

"Poetizing, eh, Rosa? I declare, you mean to immortalize your name, either by your philanthropy, or poetical talents. Let me see, — here is a poem of condolence to the "Sable Slave," the "Soldier's Burial," "The Happy Past," and "The Time to Pray." And she went on reading, notwithstanding my earnest remonstrances to the contrary:

Oh, 'tis a time, sweet time to pray,
And steal away from earthly care,
When daylight softly fades away,
And no intruding voice comes near;
For then the heart and soul combine
In truth, to worship God divine.

It is a sacred time to pray,
When chime the pealing Sabbath bells,
For then we cast earth's care away,
And in our hearts, devotion swells
To Him, who's kindly to us given
One day of sacred rest in heaven.

It is a time, fit time to pray,
When o'er our path the tempter steals,
With winning smile, to lead astray
From Him, who all our weakness feels;

For then the faithful prayer is sure
To give us strength, in grace secure.

It is a time in truth to pray,
And wake to life from slumbering deep,
When round us foes in dread array
Their dark, designing vigils keep ;
For then no evil can come near
The soul whose weapon sure is prayer.

It is a holy time to pray,
When those we love are chill in death ;
When swift the soul passeth away
From the cold form devoid of breath ;
For then, by prayer and faith alone,
Submission to God's will we own.

It is a time e'en pure to pray,
When all of earth looks dark and drear,
When fortune's smiles are turned away,
And adverse clouds are hovering near ;
For prayer will give us strength indeed,
And grace sufficient in all need.

It is a time in youth to pray,
When hope and joy serenely flow ;
It is a time in age's decay,
In sickness, health, in weal and wo ;
And oh ! the heart's best time to pray
Is always, and unceasingly.

“ Now, Rosa,” said Kate, as she concluded a perusal
of the lines, “ tell me what all this means.

“A huge basket of brogans, heavy enough to tear your vitals out, upon which you are working as though your life depended upon an immediate accomplishment; and stowed away at the bottom, line after line, convulsed with the very life-throes of a breaking heart.

“Rosa, has a few years of wedded life worn threadbare the dazzling brilliancy of your bridal robe?

“Have the joys, which sprung up with your sunlight of connubial bliss, been blasted by the withering mildew blight of coldness and neglect?

“Has Walter turned away from the priceless gem of a true and faithful love for the glittering fascinations ——”

“Oh, no, no, dear Kate,” I answered; “you know that my former bereavements have saddened my heart, and I have laid two darling babes, in their infantile beauty, to rest beneath the cold dark turf; and my heart is sad and wellnigh broken by such heavy bereavements. But Walter ——”

“Yes, yes, I see how it is, Rosa; a woman’s heart never dies, when her husband’s love burns down, down, into its inmost depths, bright and true as the magnet to the pole, as the sunlight to the wave.

“When I see a woman whose heart is not all aglow with life and hope and love, then I know that the true, warm, life-giving rays of her husband’s love are shrouded in the dark clouds of neglect, or turned away to revel amidst the more voluptuous folds of gaudier flowers.

“You may as well confess to me, Rosa,” she said, with provoking pertinacity, “for I’ll never budge an inch until I know all the whys and wherefores of these dying heart-throes.”

“O Kate, don’t press me too hard,” I said, as I laid my head upon her friendly shoulder, and soothed the agitations of my heart, and cooled the burning lava of my brain by a flood of friendly tears.

“Rosa!” whispered Kate, “I never told you before, but I never did like Walter any better than I did Effie’s wicked Wilton.

“I think he’s a perfect Behemoth, and how in the world you could exchange good old No. 10 for only the cipher (0) is more than I can imagine.

“Oh yes, he understands putting on airs well enough, I know; but it is just for the very reason that he is composed of no more substantial substance than air—and foul at that.

“Well, now, the long and short of it is, that I shall put a veto upon your wearing your life out over those odious brogans, just for the sake of supplying him with a little pocket-money for the benefit of his gaudy flowers.

“And you must go back to the Spindle City, and mingle once more amongst the scenes of your girlhood, and forget or overcome the sorrows and neglect of these few brief years.

“Come, Rosa dear, make an effort to that effect; and, perhaps, the wholesome religious discipline and superior advantages of that goodly city may induce him to reform.

“And although sister Sarah and her Green Mountain boy have emigrated to a new field of labor in the far West, yet there are many left who will remember him in their prayers the ‘next class night.’ And perhaps ere long he will return to you, as the prodigal son did to his father, in rags it may be, but in penitence and tears.”



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ROSA BACK AGAIN TO THE SPINDLE CITY.

I WAS LONELY, very lonely, in that little, strange, out of the way village. I missed my associates, the old, familiar, and kindly faces which ever wore for me a smile of friendly greeting.

I missed the Sabbath bell and the church where I was wont to worship.

I missed the pearls and gems of inspiration which fell from our pastor's lips, like a halo of living light upon a rapt and listening assembly.

I missed the weekly class, where our faithful leader pointed us encouragingly on, on and upward to the victor's prize, the golden gates, the crowns, the palms, the harps of gold, the angel band, the tree of life, the blood-washed throng, who through much tribulation had scaled the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, and gained a resting-place at last, to swell the loud anthems and hosannas to God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

I missed the ingatherings of dimpled cheeks and youthful faces to the Sabbath School.

I missed the low murmurings and happy intonations of childish voices, the chiming and blending of mellow tones in the simple song.

I missed the sympathy of true hearts, and oh! I missed a motherly bosom to weep upon. Aye, weep out my bitter heart-anguish.

And so I came back again. And oh! how happy I did feel, when the first night I laid my head upon my own pillow in this Spindle City, and heard the old familiar chimes of the factory bells, booming through the air, with peal after peal of merry music. Yes, it was music, and vibrated joyously upon the saddened tendrils of my desolate heart.

I was back again; yes, back again amidst the hurry and bustle, the din and clatter, of this busy Spindle City. Welcome smiles and kindly greetings met me on every hand; and once more my heart throbbed wildly with the hopeful anticipations of a happy future. Alas! how transitory! Walter's depraved mind led him naturally enough to seek low employment and low associates. And instead of going with the multitude to the house of God, on the holy Sabbath, he sought the society of those who congregated in low bar-rooms and dens of infamy.

He spurned religion, and reviled its humble votaries and the worshippers of a true and living God, and even defied the just retribution pronounced upon the guilty transgressors. His course was a downward one; striv-

ing even to drag me with him to the dark depths of perdition.

But my faith, like the mariner's heavy anchor in the storm-girt billow, was firmly fixed upon the God whom my mother delighted to honor.

But why proceed ; a volume could not contain the scenes of anguish through which I have struggled since then, even if there was power in language for expression and recital.

For none but the great Infinite can comprehend the anguish of a deserted wife ; and, accompanied with that desertion, the sufferings of cold and hunger, enfeebled health, a broken heart, and the sick moanings of a suffering, dependent, and helpless child.

Greater woe can no man bring upon a true and faithful wife than such cruel and heartless desertion. And no greater retribution follows in the path of the transgressor than that which, like the heavy mill-stone, grinds to powder those who are guilty of such cruel desertion.

I know that retribution is poised fearfully over him and his vile accomplices ; and when it falls, as fall it must, their sufferings will be tenfold those which they have wrought upon their innocent victims.

Kate Stanton says that he does not deserve even the scratch of my pen ; but she shall give him some black marks in her " World," which will be a caution to all truant husbands and deserters, their accomplices, Moll Pitchers, and all.

So here I am, Mrs. Allstone, notwithstanding all my sufferings, desertions, and anguish. My heart seems bound, as with a threefold cord, to the familiar scenes and associations of other days.

Yes, this same Spindle City, which you so mercilessly deprecate, is the only remaining link which binds me to the happy past, the serene joys of my girlhood, and the pleasant associations and vocations of the cotton mill.

And now, after repeating to you one more little poem which I penned a few Sabbaths after my return to Lowell, I will bid you adieu, hoping that you will never find in your travels a more degraded or unsympathizing people than those which compose the population of our goodly Spindle City.

THE SABBATH BELL.

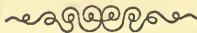
How sweetly chimes the Sabbath bell
 Upon the morning air,
 As far o'er woodland, hill and dell,
 It tells the hour of prayer!
 There's music in its varied tones
 Of thrilling melody;
 Now floating high o'er towering domes,
 Now fading far away.

Sweet messengers — I love them well,
 As softly on the ear
 Those joyous peals in cadence swell,
 Inviting up to prayer —

Where heart with heart, in love unite,
Where soul with soul combine,
In faith and hope, in truth and might,
To worship God divine.

Ho, all ye weary laden, come —
This day's a rest for thee ;
Ye poor and needy, still there's room,
The feast is bounteous — free.
Cast off the chains that gird thee now,
By tyrant's power debased,
Stand forth erect, for on thy brow
Is God's own image traced.

Oh, come then, enter at the door
That points the way to heaven ;
Where tyrants crushing power no more
Can bind the spirit riven.
The chime is pealing through the air,
O'er cot, and princely dome ;
Then hasten to the house of prayer,
For still, aye, still there's room.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

KATE STANTON'S CHRISTMAS. — AUNT HEATHERTON'S LETTER. —
EFFIE'S BRIDAL. — CONCLUSION.

“**A** V E R Y , very merry Christmas, Rosa !” said Kate Stanton, as she bounded, in her wild, gleeful, rollicking way into my cheerless apartment, on that glorious morn of all morns. “A merry Christmas.

“Good news from a friend, and glad tidings of great joy, I bring you to-day. Here is a whole package of what-not's, Rosa, from good old Aunt Heatherton, who still presides with graceful dignity over her ancient home at Willow Dale.

“She has often told me of Effie, — ‘dear Effie,’ as she calls her ; how plump, and rosy, and handsome, and happy she has grown. And little Charley, — so wild, gleeful, roguish, and loving withal ; and how indispensable they have become to her happiness, and of many other things connected with Willow Dale and the old Hall, she has kept me well informed.

“And I have answered back in my own wild, reckless, gleeful way, just enough to keep her mind at ease with the information that they had not yet caught me napping in a lunatic asylum.

“Five years have passed away since I was a guest at Heatherton Hall; the autumn months were rapidly drawing to a close, while the holidays loomed up in the perspective with crowds of gay revellers, feasts, festivals, and flirtations; beaux, bridals, and bon-bons; cards, coaches, and carnivals; candy, cakes, and cocoanuts; rows, riots, and rum; and many other knick-knacks to which poor human nature is subject to succumb to. And I, poor old maid, a little weary with the ‘World,’ sat me dreamily down before the glowing grate, rocking to and fro, in the old arm-chair, which I had always found indispensable in my hours of dreamy abstraction.

“I had just drawn my little table to my side, and opened the rose-wood box upon it, my aunt’s parting gift, in which were the sketches I had taken of my eastern tour, when the bell gave a violent ‘ding-dong, ding-o-ling-ling,’ and a moment after an attendant entered my apartment with a huge package of letters, which she deposited in a most gracious manner upon the sketches I had opened for reperusal.

“Ha!” I exclaimed, as my eye fell upon the post-mark and superscription. “Good Aunt Heatherton has stolen a march upon her mad-cap niece for once; and here is a whole bundle of happy wishes, Christmas tokens, knick-knacks, and news generally.

“And now, Rosa, I have just brought it over for you

to read, and after that you can tuck it into one corner of your ‘Cotton Mill,’ if you please.

“You will see that she has borrowed the stereotype, which half the world claims by lawful possession, in commencing with the indispensable —”

“MY DEAR KATE, — We are all astir here at Willow Dale, and the old Hall has assumed a most regal appearance in the shape of satins, laces, flowers, feathers, and many other tit-bits, indispensable to a bridal outfit.

“Don’t start, dear Kate, nor evaporate into a state of annihilated nothingness; nor burst through your basque buttons, in your wild, harum-scarum mirthfulness.

“For your staid old aunt has no idea of exchanging her single-blessedness for a life of matrimonial monopoly, to any manœuvring fortune-hunter, or moon-struck mushroom, anywhere this side of the Shampeaceso or Ahasuerus territories. Not a bit of it. But the fact is, you remember I told you about old Judge Homer — peace to his ashes — how he befriended Effie’s parents, and gave them Glen Cottage, when he took them away from Esquire Stoneheart’s.

“And you remember I told you that he had a son who paid his devoirs to the adorable Angelica, and then afterwards married a beautiful lady, an heiress, and all that.

“Well, since his marriage, he has lived principally in

a distant State, only now and then spending a few of the summer months at the old homestead, till his beautiful wife sickened and died, and then, with his two lovely children, he removed to the home of his childhood, for the sole purpose of cheering the declining days of his mother.

“ One year ago she died also, and left the old home desolate to him and his babes. And then, with his children, he began to take excursions and rides up to Willow Dale; and sometimes he would stop at the old Hall, just for his horse to take a breath or two, and his children to get a glass of milk, or strawberries and cream, or a bunch of flowers, or cherries and fruit.

“ Sometimes he would let them run beneath the willow tree with little Charley, who was sure to take them all over Willow Dale, into the sheep-pastures, and frog-ponds, and a score of other places, before the judge could think his horse sufficiently rested for a homeward trip.

“ Sometimes he would indulge in the insane idea that my dinners were the best in the world; just, I always thought, for a plausible excuse to prolong his visits at the old Hall.

“ And then, after dinner, he would wait for the sun to go down a little, to make it pleasanter riding home with the children.

“ One day he began talking about foreign affairs, annexations, South Cullina, and so on.

“He said he thought Miss Cullina had better come back to live with her sisters again, and be happy, and sort o’ respectable-like ; for he said that she belonged to a very good family, a family that made quite a spec in the world.

“ ‘ Oh, no, no, no ! Mr. Homer,’ I said, ‘ Miss Cullina is a sort of an ailer or alien-crutter, and if she gets back into the family again, will be likely to give the infection of her terrible disease — black scars and all — to some of her fair sisters. For they do say that her sickness is wus a thousand times than the smallpox or black vomit. Oh, no, no ! if Cullina has bound herself out where she can learn to work, and take care of herself, she had better stay where she is.’

“But he spoke very feelin’-like about Miss Cullina, and said if she was a little wild, and apt to cut up a little, that she was a beautiful creeture, and had a great heart, for he had seen her, and felt her great heart-throbs when he was sick and a stranger away from his own home ; and how that she wouldn’t take one picayune for all her care and trouble, but laughed, and said that she would do the same again for any of her sister’s children, large as the family was.

“I told him that she had taken a miff about a party, or some such an affair, got up by Polly Ticks ; and just because she could not lead off in the dance, and make all of her sisters follow arter, that she flared right up, and said that she would disown them all and her birth-right

too, and would go right straight off into a ferrin land, and take a house all to herself, and then she would see if Polly Ticks would have any thing to do with her party.

“ I have hearn say that Polly Ticks is a dreadful hunsome crutter, and don’t make much trouble nor nothing, but she kinder wanted to carry the ‘ Bell ’ in that party, and so she and Miss Cullina had a little kick-up all to themselves ; and the ferrin ministers and ambassadors stood a laughing, till they got a rail-splitter to come and put a stop to it. Cullina kind o’ sneaked off, and Polly Ticks has not been able to get out since. They say that that rail-splitter hurt her some.

“ And I know if all the guns had balls in them that they fired at her, that they must have hurt her dreadfully.

“ They say that that rail-splitter is a terrible critter when he sets out, and the machine that he uses, is wus than bomb-shells filled with horse-nails.

“ He didn’t seem to take much notice of what I was saying, but continued, very innocently to be sure, ‘ that he liked domestic annexations, but was not much in favor of foreign relations.’

“ I looked at him rather suspiciously through the points of my cap border, although I knew that he was a judge, and the son of a judge, and ought to understand these things.

“ But he didn’t seem to notice me at all, for, says he, and I thought rather boldly too, —

“ ‘ Aunt Heatherton I have been forming a plan of annexation which suits me better than any discussed by the public at the present time.

“ ‘ I mean the annexation of widowhood to a state of matrimony. What say you, Aunt Heatherton ? Are you willing to make a peaceful resignation of Effie ? ’

“ ‘ Effie ! ’ (audacious !) but I didn’t tell him so, for he is one of nature’s noblemen, and the most perfect specimen of humanity that you ever saw.

“ But I sprang to my feet, and you may know it didn’t take long, right before him, and says I, ‘ Judge Homer, you may take your pick out of my best yearlings, or my ducks, or chickens, or turkeys, or geese, or you may have the pigs that Charley has fattened from my cream-cans and pea-beds, but ——,’ and I stopped a moment to get breath enough to give the words a meaning emphasis,—but Effie, never ! ‘ Why, Judge Homer,’ I continued, ‘ didn’t you know that I took Effie home here when she hadn’t a friend in the world, nor a shelter either, but the cypress trees which shade the graves of her kindred ? ’

“ And I said, ‘ now, Effie, this shall be thy home and my home, and as much thine as mine, and little Charley’s too. And now they have become as indispensable to my happiness as the home itself, or the flowers, or the songs of the summer birds, or the gorgeous sunbeams.

“ ‘And you would take them away from me, and make my heart and home desolate again.

“ ‘When her wicked husband died, three years ago, I thought nobody had a right to claim her ; and so I kept loving her more and more, and I knew that she was happy, and ——. Oh, no ; I don’t believe in annexations at all, Judge Homer. Cullina is well enough where she is, and so is Effie.’

“ The judge looked as though he would rather avoid a battle if he could, although I could see that he was determined upon the annexation, even if he had to storm the whole fortification.

“ I knew that I couldn’t count as many men as he could, and so I thought it would be better to compromise a little, even if he did annex a part of my domains to his own territory.

“ Effie came in just then, looking very demure and very happy, and I — went out.

“ Somehow, the corners of my apron became a necessary appendage to my eyes the rest of the afternoon ; and after that I let things take their own way, only I said, ‘ If it must be so, that the wedding should be celebrated at the Hall.’

“ And they all said, ‘ Yes, it should be as Aunt Heatherton said about that part of the arrangement.’

“ You can’t imagine what a pyramid of finery, and it isn’t finery either, but rich, substantial fixings, he has already crowded upon her acceptance, for her bridal gear.

“And I, determined not to be outdone, am making arrangements for one of the most brilliant feats that has ever been witnessed at Willow Dale.

“I know that the sun of prosperity has now ‘risen upon Effie’s life-path; the clouds have all disappeared, and she will find safety and happiness in the heart and home of him who now proffers to her his faithful love and protection.

“Charley is very happy, too, that he is going to have a darling brother and sister and a dear papa.

“But he says, ‘that he shall come to the Hall, oh, so often, to see aunty dear; and he shall take her down to mamma’s other home; and when he gets to be a man, he will come and live at the Hall with his sister, to take care of the things and aunty too.’

“Glen Cottage is just now without an occupant; for she, who so inhumanly thrust Effie and her babe out upon the cold mercies of the world, is herself widowed and penniless, and obliged to seek the aid which she so tauntingly proposed to her in her hours of bitter need and desertion.

“Judge Homer says, ‘that he shall purchase Glen Cottage for a present to his Effie, and she may fit it up, as her own taste shall dictate, for a widow and orphans’ home.’

“Effie is very happy and very grateful; and she says, ‘there is not another man in all the world so good and noble as Judge Homer.’

“You recollect I told you that Angelica Stoneheart had married, and removed to a distant city. Her husband proved to be not only a fortune-hunter, but a reckless spendthrift.

“And so, after a few years of miserable suffering abroad, she has returned a poor, faded, forlorn creature, to her widowed and almost penniless mother, to die or suffer still more from the griping hand of poverty, which is laid heavily and surely upon them.

“For when her father, Esquire Stoneheart, died, it was proved that his claims to wealth were utterly null and void.

“So you see that the tables turn, once in a while, without the artificial aid of rapping mediums. And that moneyed wealth is not a sure foundation upon which to build the pyramids of hope and happiness, nor even of true greatness. Neither is poverty the handmaid of vice and degradation, but often the stepping-stone to honor and genuine nobility.”

“Just tell them, Rosa, before you give your manuscript to good old Mr. Finis, that Kate Stanton’s ‘World as it is’ will soon be in motion, and will follow at a respectful distance your ‘Cotton Mill.’ Then, Rosa, won’t I give it a jog the right way?”

To be answered in our next.

L I N E S

ADDRESSED TO MY MOTHER IN HEAVEN.

I'm thinking now of thee, mother ;
I'm thinking now of thee,
And of our low-roofed cottage home,
Beside the old oak-tree,
As erst it stood of yore, mother,
Ere death had entered there,
To take the choicest flower away,
That bloomed beneath thy care.

I'm thinking how thy cheek, mother,
Grew paler, day by day ;
How fearful, too, thy tearless grief
When sister passed away.
She was the first loved child, mother,
Of a merry, happy band ;
The first with autumn flowers, away
She passed to the spirit-land.

I'm thinking of the night, mother,
When thou wert dying too ;
We dreamed not when sweet sister died,
Thou wert the next to go.
In grief I pressed thy cold white lips,
Which gave me back no kiss,
And thought my heart was breaking then,
For I was motherless.

Then how we wept for thee, mother,
Through many a weary day ;
Our home was drear and desolate —
Our brothers far away —

But ere a twelvemonth passed, mother,
 That we had mourned for thee —
 One died within a stranger's home,
 Another on the sea.

Then how I wished ('twas wrong, mother),
 That I was with the dead —
 For hope's bright visions charmed no more —
 My life's sweet dreams had fled ;
 For Carro grew so pale, mother,
 So lustrous bright her eye —
 The oldest that was left us then —
 We knew she, too, must die.

And so one winter's day, mother,
 She plumed her pinions free,
 And soared from earth away, away,
 To join her songs with thee.
 And then our father died, mother,
 And the last loved brother too,
 And I felt that God was hard indeed,
 To shroud our life's morn so.

And then our Lula dear, mother,
 With the dark and brilliant eye,
 And the gentle, blue-eyed sister mate,
 Were the next and last to die.
 They are all in heaven now, mother,
 They are all in heaven with thee —
 Save sister Mary, who alone
 Remains to weep with me.

I have felt my share of grief, mother,
 And there's little left of joy,
 Save the treasure that I cherish now —
 My laughing, blue-eyed boy.
 My tears are flowing fast, mother,
 My heart is throbbing wild,
 For there are none to love me so
 As erst you loved your child.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF SISTER LULA.

SISTER, farewell, the last fond tie is riven,
 Which linked thy guileless heart with things of earth ;
 And now thy spirit long since winged for heaven,
 Has claimed with sainted ones a heavenly birth.

Sister, farewell, thy loved form sweetly slumbers
 Beneath the verdant turf of beauteous Spring,
 Where songsters breathe their wild melodious numbers,
 And 'neath their shades a requiem for thee sing.

Sister, sleep on : I would not wake to sorrow
 Thy pure and sainted spirit from its rest,
 I would not e'en a blissful moment borrow
 From thee, enrobed in glory with the blest.

But I would chant with thee in living bowers
 The lofty anthems of thy spirit-land ;
 And roam with thee 'mongst fair ambrosial flowers —
 Where youth and beauty feel no withering hand.

Sleep on in peace, this heart with anguish riven,
 No more can greet thee whom I loved so well ;
 'Till I have gained thy far-off blissful haven,
 'Till then, sweet sister, — loved one, — fare thee well.

THE SOLDIER'S BURIAL.

FAR away from his home in his manhood's bloom,
They bear him all silently to the tomb ;
Where the wild-flowers blush, and the zephyrs chime
His requiem plaints in a southern clime.

Oh, sadly the tones on the soft air come,
Of the mournful fife, and the muffled drum ;
But sadder the hearts of that gallant band
That bear him to rest in a stranger's land.

His shroud is the banner he proudly bore
From his childhood's home and his native shore,
While far o'er the woodlands, and hill-tops, and dells,
The parting salute of his brave clan swells.

They have gone — all gone, those warriors brave,
With measured step from his lonely grave ;
But the tear-drops are sparkling they sorrowing shed,
Like pearls in night's drapery, 'circling his bed.

The willows, like sad hearts, o'er broken hopes bend
Their shadows with those of the dark cypress blend ;
With their soft sighing voices, and wide, solemn wave,
They guard, by sweet vigil, the soldier's lone grave.







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